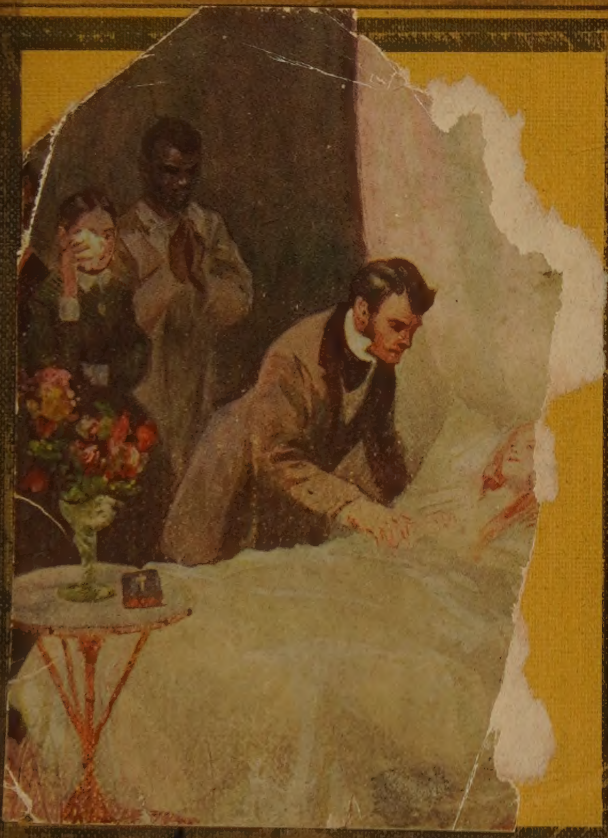

UNCLE·TOM'S CABIN

H·BEECHER·STOWE

TRINITY U.F. CHURCH SABBATH SCHOOL,
JOHNSTONE.

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"Tom stepped upon the block."
(*Chapter XXVI*)

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

BY

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

WARD, LOCK & CO., LTD.
LONDON AND MELBOURNE

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO A MAN OF HUMANITY	5
II.	THE MOTHER	11
III.	THE HUSBAND AND FATHER	13
IV.	AN EVENING IN UNCLE TOM'S CABIN	17
V.	SHOWING THE FEELINGS OF LIVING PROPERTY ON CHANGING OWNERS	24
VI.	DISCOVERY	31
VII.	THE MOTHER'S STRUGGLE	38
VIII.	MRS. SHELBY IS TOLD	47
IX.	IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT A SENATOR IS BUT A MAN	49
X.	THE PROPERTY IS CARRIED OFF	58
XI.	SELECT INCIDENT OF LAWFUL TRADE	64
XII.	THE QUAKER SETTLEMENT	67
XIII.	EVANGELINE	70
XIV.	OF TOM'S NEW MASTER, AND VARIOUS OTHER MATTERS	75
XV.	TOM'S MISTRESS AND HER OPINIONS	83
XVI.	THE FREEMAN'S DEFENCE	88
XVII.	TOM AND EVA	102
XVIII.	TOPSY	104

CHAP.		PAGE
XIX.	"THE GRASS WITHERETH—THE FLOWER FADETH"	117
XX.	FORESHADOWINGS	119
XXI.	THE LITTLE EVANGELIST	125
XXII.	DEATH	129
XXIII.	"THIS IS THE LAST OF EARTH"	140
XXIV.	REUNION	146
XXV.	THE UNPROTECTED	156
XXVI.	THE SLAVE-WAREHOUSE	162
XXVII.	THE MIDDLE PASSAGE	171
XXVIII.	DARK PLACES	175
XXIX.	CASSY	179
XXX.	THE QUADROON'S STORY	186
XXXI.	THE TOKENS	195
XXXII.	LEGREE TEMPORISES	200
XXXIII.	LIBERTY	206
XXXIV.	THE VICTORY	212
XXXV.	THE STRATAGEM	220
XXXVI.	THE MARTYR	229
XXXVII.	THE YOUNG MASTER	235
XXXVIII.	AN AUTHENTIC GHOST STORY	241
XXXIX.	RESULTS	247
XL.	THE LIBERATOR	252

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO A MAN OF HUMANITY

LATE in the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine, in a well-furnished dining-parlour, in the town of P——, in Kentucky. There were no servants present.

For convenience' sake, we have said, hitherto, two *gentlemen*. One of the parties, however, when critically examined, did not seem, strictly speaking, to come under that species. He was a short, thick-set man, with coarse, commonplace features, and that swaggering air of pretension which marks a low man who is trying to elbow his way upwards in the world. He was much over-dressed, in a gaudy vest of many colours, a blue neckerchief, bedropped gaily with yellow spots, and arranged with a flaunting tie, quite in keeping with the general air of the man.

His companion, Mr. Shelby, had the appearance of a gentleman; and the arrangements of the house, and the general air of the housekeeping, indicated easy and even opulent circumstances. The two were in the midst of an earnest conversation.

"That is the way I should arrange the matter," said Mr. Shelby.

"I can't make trade that way—I positively can't, Mr. Shelby," said the other, holding up a glass of wine between his eye and the light.

"Why, the fact is, Haley, Tom is an uncommon fellow; he is certainly worth that sum anywhere—steady, honest, capable, and pious, manages my whole farm like a clock."

"Some folks don't believe there is pious niggers, Shelby," said Haley.

"Well, Tom's the real article, if ever a fellow was,"

rejoined the other. "Why, last fall, I let him go to Cincinnati alone, to do business for me, and bring home five hundred dollars. Tom comes back sure enough—I knew he would. I am very sorry to part with Tom, I must say. You ought to let him cover the whole balance of the debt; and you would, Haley, if you had any conscience."

"Well, I've got just as much conscience as any man in business can afford to keep—just a little, you know, to swear by, as 'twere." said the trader jocularly; "and then I'm ready to do anything in reason, to 'blige friends; but this yer, you see, is a leetle too hard on a fellow—a leetle too hard."

The trader sighed contemplatively, and poured out some more brandy.

"Well, then, Haley, how will you trade?" said Mr. Shelby, after an uneasy interval of silence.

"Well, haven't you a boy or gal that you could throw in with Tom?"

"Hum!—none that I could well spare; to tell the truth, it's only hard necessity makes me willing to sell at all. I don't like parting with any of my hands, that's a fact."

Here the door opened, and a small quadroon boy, between four and five years of age, entered the room. There was something in his appearance remarkably beautiful and engaging. His black hair, fine as floss silk, hung in glossy curls about his round, dimpled face, while a pair of large dark eyes, full of fire and softness, looked out from beneath the rich long lashes, as he peered curiously into the apartment.

"Hulloa, Jim Crow!" said Mr. Shelby, whistling, and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him, "pick that up, now!"

The child scampered with all his little strength after the prize, while his master laughed.

"Come here, Jim Crow," said he.

The child came up, and the master patted the curly head, and chucked him under the chin.

"Now, Jim, show this gentleman how you can dance and sing."

The boy commenced one of those wild, grotesque songs, common among the negroes, in a rich, clear voice, accompanying his singing with many comic evolutions of the

hands, feet, and whole body, all in perfect time to the music.

"Bravo!" said Haley, throwing him a quarter of an orange.

Both gentlemen laughed uproariously.

"Hurrah! bravo! what a young un!" said Haley; "that chap's a case, I'll promise. Tell you what," said he, suddenly clapping his hand on Mr. Shelby's shoulder, "fling in that chap and I'll settle the business—I will. Come, now, if that ain't doing the thing up about the rightest!"

At this moment the door was pushed gently open, and a young quadroon woman, apparently about twenty-five, entered the room.

There needed only a glance from the child to her, to identify her as its mother. There was the same rich, full, dark eye, with its long lashes; the same ripples of silky black hair. The brown of her complexion gave way on the cheek to a perceptible flush, which deepened as she saw the gaze of the strange man fixed upon her in bold and undisguised admiration. Her dress was of the neatest possible fit, and set off to advantage her finely-moulded shape. A delicately formed hand and a trim foot and ankle were items of her appearance that did not escape the quick eye of the trader, well used to run up at a glance the points of a fine female article.

"Well, Eliza?" said her master, as she stopped and looked hesitatingly at him.

"I was looking for Harry, please, sir," and the boy bounded towards her, showing his spoils, which he had gathered in the skirt of his robe.

"Well, take him away, then," said Mr. Shelby; and hastily she withdrew, carrying the child on her arm.

"Well, you'll let me have the boy," said the trader; "you must own I've come down pretty handsomely for him."

"What on earth can you want with the child?" said Shelby.

"Why, I've got a friend that's going into this yer branch of the business—wants to buy up handsome boys to raise for the market. Fancy articles entirely—sell for waiters and so on to rich uns, that can pay for handsome uns. It

sets off one of yer great places—a real handsome boy to open door, wait and tend. They fetch a good sum ; and this little devil is such a comical, musical concern, he's just the article."

" I would rather not sell him," said Mr. Shelby thoughtfully ; " the fact is, sir, I'm a humane man, and I hate to take the boy from his mother, sir."

" Lor' bless ye, yes ! These critters an't like white folks, you know ; they gets over things, only manage right. 'Tain't, you know, as if it was white folks, that's brought up in the way of 'spectin' to keep their children and wives and all that. Niggers, you know, that's fetched up properly ha'n't no kind of 'spectations of no kind ; so all these things comes easier."

" I'm afraid mine are not properly brought up, then," said Mr. Shelby.

" S'pose not ; you Kentucky folks spile your niggers. You mean well by 'em, but 'tain't no real kindness, arter all. Now, a nigger, you see, what's got to be hacked and tumbled round the world, and sold to Tom, and Dick, and the Lord knows who, 'tain't no kindness to be givin' on him notions and expectations, and bringin' on him up too well, for the rough and tumble comes all the harder on him arter. Now, I venture to say, your niggers would be quite chop-fallen in a place where some of your plantation niggers would be singing and whooping like all possessed. Every man, you know, Mr. Shelby, naturally thinks well of his own ways ; and I think I treat niggers just about as well as it's ever worth while to treat 'em."

" It's a happy thing to be satisfied," said Mr. Shelby, with a slight shrug, and some perceptible feelings of a disagreeable nature.

" Well," said Haley, after they had both silently picked their nuts for a season, " what do you say ? "

" Well, call up this evening, between six and seven, and you shall have my answer," said Mr. Shelby, and the trader bowed himself out of the apartment.

Perhaps the mildest form of the system of slavery is to be seen in the State of Kentucky. Whoever visits some estates there, and witnesses the good-humoured indulgence of some masters and mistresses, and the affectionate loyalty

of some slaves, might be tempted to dream the oft-fabled poetic legend of a patriarchal institution, and all that; but over and above the scene there broods a portentous shadow—the shadow of *law*. So long as the law considers all these human beings, with beating hearts and living affections, only as so many *things* belonging to a master—so long as the failure, or misfortune, or imprudence, or death of the kindest owner may cause them any day to exchange a life of kind protection and indulgence for one of hopeless misery and toil—so long it is impossible to make anything beautiful or desirable in the best regulated administration of slavery.

Mr. Shelby was a fair average kind of man, good-natured and kindly, and disposed to easy indulgence of those around him, and there had never been a lack of anything which might contribute to the physical comfort of the negroes on his estate. He had, however, speculated largely and quite loosely—had involved himself deeply, and his notes to a large amount had come into the hands of Haley; and this small piece of information is the key to the preceding conversation.

Now it had so happened that, in approaching the door Eliza had caught enough of the conversation to know that a trader was making offers to her master for somebody.

She would gladly have stopped at the door to listen, as she came out; but her mistress just then calling, she was obliged to hasten away.

Still she thought she heard the trader make an offer for her boy—could she be mistaken? Her heart swelled and throbbed, and she involuntarily strained him so tight that the little fellow looked up into her face in astonishment.

"Why, Eliza, child! what ails you?" said her mistress.

"O missis, missis!" said Eliza, "there's been a trader talking with master in the parlour! I heard him."

"Well, silly child, suppose there has!"

"O missis! *do* you suppose mas'r would sell my Harry?" and the poor creature threw herself into a chair and sobbed convulsively.

"Sell him! No, you foolish girl! You know your master never deals with those southern traders, and never means to sell any of his servants, so long as they behave

well. Why, you silly child, who do you think would want to buy your Harry? Do you think all the world are set on him as you are, you goosie? Come, cheer up, and hook my dress. There, now, put my hair up in that pretty braid you learnt the other day, and don't go listening at doors any more."

"Well, but, missis, *you* would never give your consent—to—to——"

"Nonsense, child! to be sure I shouldn't. What do you talk so for? I would as soon have one of my own children sold. But really, Eliza, you are getting altogether too proud of that little fellow. A man can't put his nose into the door, but you think he must be coming to buy him."

Reassured by her mistress's confident tone, Eliza proceeded nimbly and adroitly with her toilet, laughing at her own fears as she proceeded.

Mrs. Shelby was a woman of high class, both intellectually and morally. To that natural magnanimity and generosity of mind which one often marks as characteristic of the women of Kentucky, she added high moral and religious sensibility and principle, carried out with great energy and ability into practical results. Her husband, who made no professions to any particular religious character, nevertheless reverenced and respected the consistency of hers, and stood, perhaps, a little in awe of her opinion. Certain it was, that he gave her unlimited scope in all her benevolent efforts for the comfort, instruction, and improvement of her servants, though he never took any decided part in them himself.

The heaviest load on his mind, after his conversation with the trader, lay in the foreseen necessity of breaking to his wife the arrangement contemplated—meeting the importunities and opposition which he knew he should have reason to encounter.

Mrs. Shelby, being entirely ignorant of her husband's embarrassments, and knowing only the general kindliness of his temper, had been quite sincere in the entire incredulity with which she had met Eliza's suspicions. In fact, she dismissed the matter from her mind without a second thought, and being occupied, in preparations for an evening visit, it passed out of her thoughts entirely.

CHAPTER II

THE MOTHER

ELIZA had been brought up by her mistress from girlhood as a petted and indulged favourite. Safe under the protecting care of her mistress, Eliza had reached maturity without those temptations which make beauty so fatal an inheritance to a slave. She had been married to a bright and talented young mulatto man, who was a slave on a neighbouring estate, and who bore the name of George Harris.

This young man had been hired out by his master to work in a bagging-factory, where his adroitness and ingenuity caused him to be considered the first hand in the place. He had invented a machine for the cleaning of the hemp, which, considering the education and circumstances of the inventor, displayed quite as much mechanical genius as Whitney's cotton gin.*

He was possessed of a handsome person and pleasing manners and was a general favourite in the factory. Nevertheless, as this young man was in the eye of the law not a man, but a thing, all these superior qualifications were subject to the control of a vulgar, narrow-minded tyrannical master. This same gentleman, having heard of the fame of George's invention, took a ride over to the factory, to see what this intelligent chattel had been about. He was received with great enthusiasm by the employer, who congratulated him on possessing so valuable a slave.

His master began to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority. What business had his slave to be marching round the country, inventing machines, and holding up his head among gentlemen? He'd soon put a stop to it. Accordingly, the manufacturer and all hands concerned were astounded when he suddenly demanded George's wages, and announced his intention of taking him home.

"But, Mr. Harris," remonstrated the manufacturer, "isn't this rather sudden?"

*A machine of this description was really the invention of a young coloured man in Kentucky.

"What if it is—isn't the man *mine?*"

"We would be willing, sir, to increase the rate of compensation."

"No object at all, sir. I don't need to hire any of my hands out, unless I've a mind to.

"But only think of his inventing this machine!" interposed one of the workmen, rather unluckily.

"Oh, yes!—a machine for saving work, is it? He'd invent that, I'll be bound; let a nigger alone for that, any time. They are all labour-saving machines themselves, every one of 'em. No, he shall tramp!"

George had stood like one transfixed, at hearing his doom thus suddenly pronounced by a power that he knew was irresistible. He folded his arms, tightly pressed in his lips, but a whole volcano of bitter feelings burned in his bosom, and sent streams of fire through his veins. He breathed short, and his large dark eyes flashed like live coals; and he might have broken out into some dangerous ebullition, had not the kindly manufacturer touched him on the arm, and said, in a low tone:

"Give way, George; go with him for the present. We'll try to help you, yet."

George was taken home, and put to the meanest drudgery of the farm. He had been able to repress every disrespectful word; but the flashing eye, the gloomy and troubled brow, were part of a natural language that could not be repressed—indubitable signs, which showed too plainly that the man could not become a thing.

It was during the happy period of his employment in the factory that George had seen and married his wife. During that period—being much trusted and favoured by his employer—he had free liberty to come and go at discretion. The marriage was highly approved of by Mrs. Shelby, who, with a little womanly complacency in match-making, felt pleased to unite her handsome favourite with one of her own class who seemed in every way suited to her. For a year or two Eliza saw her husband frequently, and there was nothing to interrupt their happiness, except the loss of two infant children, to whom she was passionately attached, and whom she mourned with a grief so intense as to call for gentle remonstrance from her mistress, who sought, with

maternal anxiety, to direct her naturally passionate feelings within the bounds of reason and religion.

After the birth of little Harry, however, she had gradually become tranquillized and settled ; and Eliza was a happy woman up to the time that her husband was rudely torn from his kind employer, and brought under the iron sway of his legal owner.

The manufacturer, true to his word, had visited Mr. Harris a week or two after George had been taken away, when, as he hoped, the heat of the occasion had passed away, and tried every possible inducement to lead him to restore him to his former employment.

" You needn't trouble yourself to talk any longer," said he doggedly ; " I know my own business, sir."

" I did not presume to interfere with it, sir. I only thought that you might think it for your interest to let your man to us on the terms proposed."

" Oh, I understand the matter well enough ! I saw you winking and whispering the day I took him out of the factory ; but you don't come it over me that way. It's a free country, sir ; the man's *mine*, and I do what I please with him—that's it ! "

And so fell George's last hope, nothing before him but a life of toil and drudgery, rendered more bitter by every little smarting vexation and indignity which tyrannical ingenuity could devise.

A very humane jurist once said, " The worst use you can put a man to is to hang him." No ; there is another use that a man can be put to that is worse !

CHAPTER III

THE HUSBAND AND FATHER

Mrs. Shelby had gone on her visit, and Eliza stood in the verandah, rather dejectedly looking after the retreating carriage, when a hand was laid on her shoulder. She turned, and a bright smile lighted up her fine eyes.

" George, is it you ? How you frightened me ! Well ; I am so glad you's come ! Missis is gone to spend the

afternoon ; so come into my little room, and we'll have the time all to ourselves."

Saying this, she drew him into a neat little apartment opening on the verandah, where she generally sat at her sewing, within call of her mistress.

"How glad I am !—why don't you smile ?—and look at Harry—how he grows ! " The boy stood shyly regarding his father through his curls, holding close to the skirts of his mother's dress. "Isn't he beautiful ? " said Eliza, lifting his long curls and kissing him.

"I wish he'd never been born ! " said George bitterly. "I wish I'd never been born myself ! "

Surprised and frightened, Eliza sat down, leaned her head on her husband's shoulder and burst into tears.

"O George ! how can you ? "

"Yes, Eliza, it's all misery, misery, misery ! My life is bitter as wormwood ; the very life is burning out of me. I'm a poor, miserable, forlorn drudge ; I shall only drag you down with me, that's all. What's the use of our trying to do anything, trying to know anything, trying to be anything ? What's the use of living ? I wish I was dead ! "

"Well, it *is* dreadful," said Eliza ; "but, after all, Mr. Harris is your master, you know."

"My master ! and who made him my master ? That's what I think of—what right has he to me ? I'm a man as much as he is ; I'm a better man than he is ; I know more about business than he does ; I'm a better manager than he is ; I can read better than he can ; I can write a better hand ; and I've learned it all myself, and no thanks to him —I've learned it in spite of him ; and now what right has he to make a dray-horse of me ?—to take me from things I can do, and do better than he can, and put me to work that any horse can do ? He tries to do it ; he says he'll bring me down and humble me, and he puts me to just the hardest, meanest, and dirtiest work on purpose."

"O George—George—you frighten me ! Why, I never heard you talk so ; I'm afraid you'll do something dreadful. I don't wonder at your feelings at all ; but, oh ! do be careful—do, do—for my sake—for Harry's ! "

"I have been careful, and I have been patient ; but it's growing worse and worse—flesh and blood can't bear it any

longer. Every chance he can get to insult and torment me, he takes. I thought I could do my work well, and keep on quiet, and have some time to read and learn out of work-hours; but the more he sees I can do, the more he loads on. He says that though I don't say anything, he sees I've got the devil in me, and he means to bring it out; and one of these days it will come out in a way that he won't like, or I'm mistaken."

"Oh, dear, what shall we do?" said Eliza mournfully.

"It was only yesterday," said George, "as I was busy loading stones into a cart, that young Mas'r Tom stood there, slashing his whip so near the horse that the creature was frightened. I asked him to stop as pleasant as I could; he just kept right on. I begged him again, and then he turned on me and began striking me. I held his hand and then he screamed, and kicked, and ran to his father, and told him that I was fighting him. He came in a rage, and said he'd teach me who was my master: and he tied me to a tree, and cut switches for young master, and told him that he might whip me till he was tired; and he did it too. If I don't make him remember it some time!"

And the brow of the young man grew dark, and his eyes burned with an expression that made his young wife tremble. "Who made this man my master—that's what I want to know?" he said.

"Well," said Eliza, mournfully, "I always thought that I must obey my master and mistress, or I couldn't be a Christian."

"There is some sense in it, in your case: they have brought you up like a child—fed you, clothed you, indulged you, and taught you, so that you have a good education—that is some reason why they should claim you. But I have been kicked, and cuffed, and sworn at, and at the best only let alone; and what do I owe? I've paid for all my keep a hundred times over. I *won't* bear it—no, I *won't!*" he said, clenching his hand with a fierce frown.

Eliza trembled and was silent. She had never seen her husband in this mood before; and her gentle system of ethics seemed to bend like a reed in the surges of such passions.

"Lately mas'r has been saying that he was a fool to let me marry off the place; that he hates Mr. Shelby and all

his tribe, because they are proud, and hold their heads up above him, and that I've got proud notions from you, and he says he won't let me come here any more, and that I shall take a wife and settle down on his place. At first he only scolded and grumbled these things; but yesterday he told me that I should take Mina for a wife, and settle down in a cabin with her, or he would sell me down river."

"Why, but you were married to *me*, by the minister, as much as if you'd been a white man!" said Eliza simply.

"Don't you know a slave can't be married? There is no law in this country for that: I can't hold you for my wife, if he chooses to part us. That's why I wish I'd never seen you—why I wish I'd never been born; it would have been better for us both—it would have been better for this poor child if he had never been born. All this may happen to him yet!"

"Oh, but master is so kind!"

"Yes, but who knows? he may die; and then he may be sold to nobody knows who. What pleasure is it that he is handsome, and smart, and bright? I tell you, Eliza, that a sword will pierce through your soul for every good and pleasant thing your child is or has—it will make him worth too much for you to keep."

The words smote heavily on Eliza's heart; the vision of the trader came before her eyes, and as if some one had struck her a deadly blow, she turned pale and gasped for breath. She looked nervously out on the verandah, where the boy, tired of the grave conversation, had retired, and where he was riding triumphantly up and down on Mr. Shelby's walking stick. She would have spoken to tell her husband her fears, but checked herself.

"No, no, he has enough to bear, poor fellow!" she thought. "No, I won't tell him; besides, it an't true; missis never deceives us."

"So, Eliza, my girl," said the husband, mournfully, "bear up now, and good-bye; for I'm going."

"Going, George!—going where?"

"To Canada," said he, straightening himself up; "and when I'm there I'll buy you—that's all the hope that's left us. You have a kind master that won't refuse to sell you. I'll buy you and the boy—God helping me, I will!"

"Oh, dreadful! If you should be taken!"

"I won't be taken, Eliza—I'll *die* first! I'll be free, or I'll die!"

"You won't kill yourself!"

"No need of that; they will kill me fast enough. They will never get me down the river alive."

"O George, for my sake, do be careful! Don't do anything wicked; don't lay hands on yourself, or anybody else. You are tempted too much—too much; but don't—go you must—but go carefully, prudently; pray God to help you!"

"Well, then, Eliza, hear my plan. Mas'r took it into his head to send me right by here, with a note to Mr. Symmes, that lives a mile past. I believe he expected I should come here to tell you what I have. It would please him if he thought it would aggravate 'Shelby's folks,' as he calls 'em. I'm going home quite resigned, you understand, as if all was over. I've got some preparations made, and there are those that will help me; and, in the course of a week or so, I shall be among the missing, some day. Pray for me, Eliza; perhaps the good Lord will hear *you*."

"Oh, pray yourself, George. and go trusting in Him; then you won't do anything wicked."

"Well now, *good-bye*," said George, holding Eliza's hands, and gazing into her eyes without moving. They stood silent; then there were last words, and sobs, and bitter weeping—such parting as those may make whose hope to meet again is as the spider's web; and the husband and wife were parted.

CHAPTER IV

AN EVENING IN UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

THE cabin of Uncle Tom was a small log building, close adjoining to "the house," as the negro *par excellence* designates his master's dwelling. In front it had a neat garden-patch, where, every summer, strawberries, raspberries, and a variety of fruit and vegetables, flourished

under careful tending. The whole front of it was covered by a large scarlet begonia and a native multiflora rose, which, entwisting and interlacing, left scarce a vestige of the rough logs to be seen.

Let us enter the dwelling. The evening meal at the house is over, and Aunt Chloe, who presided over its preparation as head cook, has left to inferior officers in the kitchen the business of clearing away and washing dishes, and come out into her own snug territories, to "get her ole man's supper." A round, black, shining face is hers, so glossy as to suggest the idea that she might have been washed over with white of eggs, like one of her own tea-rusks. Her whole plump countenance beams with satisfaction and contentment from under her well-starched checked turban, bearing on it, however, if we must confess it, a little of that tinge of self-consciousness which becomes the first cook of the neighbourhood, as Aunt Chloe was universally held and acknowledged to be.

A cook she certainly was, in the very bone and centre of her soul. Her corn-cake, in all its varieties of hoe-cake, dodgers, muffins, and other species too numerous to mention, was a sublime mystery to all less practised compounders; and she would shake her fat sides with honest pride and merriment, as she would narrate the fruitless efforts that one and another of her compeers had made to attain to her elevation.

Just at present, however, Aunt Chloe is looking into the bake-pan; in which congenial operation we shall leave her till we finish our picture of the cottage.

In one corner of it stood a bed, covered neatly with a snowy spread; and by the side of it was a piece of carpeting of some considerable size. In the other corner was a bed of much humbler pretensions, and evidently designed for *use*. The wall over the fireplace was adorned with some very brilliant scriptural prints, and a portrait of General Washington.

On a rough bench on the corner, a couple of woolly-headed boys, with glistening black eyes and fat shining cheeks, were busy in superintending the first walking operations of the baby, which, as is usually the case, consisted in getting up on its feet, balancing a moment, and then

tumbling down—each successive failure being violently cheered, as something decidedly clever.

A table, somewhat rheumatic in its limbs, was drawn out in front of the fire, and covered with a cloth, displaying cups and saucers of a decidedly brilliant pattern, with other symptoms of an approaching meal. At this table was seated Uncle Tom, Mr. Shelby's best hand, who, as he is to be the hero of our story, we must daguerreotype for our readers. He was a large, broad-chested, powerfully made man, of a full glossy black, and a face whose truly African features were characterised by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindliness and benevolence. There was something about his whole air self-respecting and dignified, yet united with a confiding and humble simplicity.

He was very busily intent at this moment on a slate lying before him, on which he was carefully and slowly endeavouring to accomplish a copy of some letters, in which operation he was overlooked by young Mas'r George, a smart, bright boy of thirteen, who appeared fully to realise the dignity of his position as instructor.

"Aunt Chloe, I'm getting mighty hungry," said George. "Isn't that cake in the skillet almost done?"

"Mose done, Mas'r George," said Aunt Chloe, lifting the lid, and peering in; "browning beautiful—a real lovely brown. Ah, let me alone for dat! Missis let Sally try to make some cake t'other day, jes to *larn* her, she said. 'Oh, go 'way, missis,' says I; 'it really hurts my feelin's now, to see good vittles spiled dat ar way!' Cake ris all to one side—no shape at all, no more than my shoe—go 'way!"

And with this final expression of contempt for Sally's greenness, Aunt Chloe whipped the cover off the bake-kettle, and disclosed to view a neatly-baked pound-cake, of which no city confectioner need to have been ashamed. This being evidently the central point of the entertainment, Aunt Chloe began now to bustle about earnestly in the supper department.

"They wanted me to come to supper in the house," said George; "but I knew what was what too well for that, Aunt Chloe."

"So you did—so you did, honey," said Aunt Chloe, heaping the smoking batter-cakes on his plate; "you know'd your old aunty'd keep the best for you. Oh, let you alone for dat—go 'way!"

And with that Aunty gave George a nudge with her finger, designed to be immensely facetious, and turned again to her griddle with great briskness.

"Now for the cake," said Mas'r George, when the activity of the griddle-department had somewhat subsided.

Soon, Master George had arrived at that pass to which even a boy can come (under common circumstances), when he really could not eat another morsel, and therefore he was at leisure to notice the pile of woolly-heads and glistening eyes which were regarding their operations hungrily from the opposite corner.

"Here, you Mose, Pete," he said, breaking off liberal bits, and throwing it at them; "you want some, don't you? Come, Aunt Chloe, bake them some cakes."

And George and Tom moved to a comfortable seat in the chimney corner; while Aunt Chloe, after baking a goodly pile of cakes took her baby on her lap, and began alternately filling its mouth and her own, and distributing to Mose and Pete, who seemed rather to prefer eating theirs as they rolled about on the floor under the table, tickling each other, and occasionally pulling the baby's toes.

Presently the boys emerged from under the table, and, with hands and faces well plastered with molasses, began a vigorous kissing of the baby.

"Get along wid ye!" said the mother, pushing away their woolly heads. "Ye'll all stick together, and never get clar, if ye do dat fashion. Go 'long to de spring and wash yerselves!" she said, seconding her exhortations by a slap, which resounded very formidably, but which seemed only to knock out so much more laugh from the young ones, as they tumbled precipitately over each other out of doors, where they fairly screamed with merriment.

"Did ye ever see such aggravating young uns?" said Aunt Chloe, rather complacently, as, producing an old towel, kept for such emergencies, she poured a little water out of the cracked teapot on it, and began rubbing off the molasses from the baby's face and hands; and having

polished her till she shone, she set her down in Tom's lap, while she busied herself in clearing away supper. The baby employed the intervals in pulling Tom's nose, scratching his face, and burying her fat hands in his woolly hair, which last operation seemed to afford her special content.

"Ain't she a peart young un!" said Tom, holding her from him to take a full-length view; then, getting up, he set her on his broad shoulder, and began capering and dancing with her, while Mas'r George snapped at her with his pocket-handkerchief, and Mose and Pete, now returned again, roared after her like bears, till Aunt Chloe declared that they fairly "took her head off" with their noise.

"Well, now I hopes you are done," said Aunt Chloe, who had been busy in pulling out a rude box of a trundle-bed; "and now, you Mose and you Pete, get into thar; for we's going to have the meetin'."

"Oh, mother, we don't wanter. We wants to sit up to meetin'—meetin's is so curis. We likes 'em."

"La, Aunt Chloe, shove it under, and let 'em sit up," said Mas'r George, decisively, giving a push to the rude machine.

Aunt Chloe, having thus saved appearances, seemed highly delighted to push the thing under, saying, as she did so. "Well, mebbe 'twill do 'em some good."

The house now resolved itself into a committee of the whole, to consider the accommodation and arrangements for the meeting.

"What's we to do for cheers now, I declar' I don't know," said Aunt Chloe. As the meeting had been held at Uncle Tom's weekly, for an indefinite length of time, without any more "cheers," there seemed some encouragement to hope that a way would be discovered at present.

"Well, ole man," said Aunt Chloe, "you'll have to tote in them ar bar'ls."

Two empty casks were rolled into the cabin, and being secured from rolling by stones on each side, boards were laid across them, which arrangement, together with the turning down of certain tubs and pails, and the disposing of the rickety chairs, at last completed the preparation.

"Mas'r George is such a beautiful reader, now, I know

he'll stay to read for us." said Aunt Chloe ; " 'pears like 'twill be so much more interestin'."

George very readily consented, for your boy is always ready for anything that makes him of importance.

The room was soon filled with a motley assemblage, from the old grey-headed patriarch of eighty to the young girl and lad of fifteen. A few of the worshippers belonged to families hard by, who had got permission to attend.

After a while the singing commenced, to the evident delight of all present. Not even all the disadvantage of nasal intonation could prevent the effect of the naturally fine voices, in airs at once wild and spirited. The words were sometimes the well-known and common hymns sung in the churches about, and sometimes of a wilder, more indefinite character, picked up at camp-meetings.

There were others, which made incessant mention of " Jordan's banks," and " Canaan's fields," and the " New Jerusalem " ; for the negro mind, impassioned and imaginative, always attaches itself to hymns and expressions of a vivid and pictorial nature ; and, as they sang, some laughed, some cried, and some clapped hands, or shook hands rejoicingly with each other, as if they had fairly gained the other side of the river.

Various exhortations or relations of experience followed, and intermingled with the singing.

Mas'r George, by request, read the last chapters of Revelation, often interrupted by such exclamations as " The *sakes*, now ! " " Only hear that ! " " Jest think on't ! " " Is all that a-comin' sure enough ? "

George, who was a bright boy, and well trained in religious things by his mother, finding himself an object of general admiration, threw in expositions of his own, from time to time, with a commendable seriousness and gravity, for which he was admired by the young, and blessed by the old ; and it was agreed, on all hands, that a " minister couldn't lay it off better than he did " ; that " 'twas reely 'mazin' ! "

Uncle Tom was a sort of patriarch in religious matters in the neighbourhood. Having naturally an organisation in which the *morale* was strongly predominant, together with a greater breadth and cultivation of mind than

obtained among his companions, he was looked up to with great respect, as a sort of minister among them ; and the simple, hearty, sincere style of his exhortations might have edified even better educated persons. But it was in prayer that he especially excelled. Nothing could exceed the touching simplicity, the childlike earnestness of his prayer, enriched with the language of Scripture, which seemed so entirely to have wrought itself into his being as to have become a part of himself, and to drop from his lips unconsciously ; in the language of a pious old negro, he "prayed right up." And so much did his prayer always work on the devotional feelings of his audiences, that there seemed often a danger that it would be lost altogether in the abundance of the responses which broke out everywhere around him.

While this scene was passing in the cabin of the man, one quite otherwise passed in the halls of the master.

The trader and Mr. Shelby were seated together in the dining-room afore-named, at a table covered with papers and writing utensils.

Mr. Shelby was busy in counting some bundles of bills, which, as they were counted, he pushed over to the trader, who also counted them.

"All fair," said the trader ; "and now for signing these yer."

Mr. Shelby hastily drew the bills of sale towards him, and signed them like a man that hurries over some disagreeable business, and then pushed them over with the money. Haley produced, from a well-worn valise, a parchment, which, after looking over it a moment, he handed to Mr. Shelby, who took it with a gesture of suppressed eagerness.

"Wal, now the thing's *done*!" said the trader, getting up.

"It's *done*!" said Mr. Shelby, in a musing tone ; and, fetching a long breath, he repeated, "*It's done!*"

"Yer don't seem to feel much pleased with it, 'pears to me," said the trader.

"Haley," said Mr. Shelby, "I hope you'll remember that you promised on your honour, you wouldn't sell Tom, without knowing what sort of hands he's going into."

"Why, you've just done it," said the trader.

"Circumstances, you well know, *obliged* me," said Shelby haughtily.

"Wal, you know they may 'blige *me*, too," said the trader. "Howsomever, I'll do the very best I can in gettin' Tom a good berth; as to my treating on him bad, you needn't be a grain afeard. If there's anything that I thank the Lord for, it is that I'm noways cruel."

Mr. Shelby did not feel particularly reassured by these declarations; but as they were the best comfort the case admitted of, he allowed the trader to depart in silence, and betook himself to a solitary cigar.

CHAPTER V

SHOWING THE FEELINGS OF LIVING PROPERTY ON CHANGING OWNERS

Mr. and Mrs. Shelby had retired to their apartment for the night. Turning to her husband, Mrs. Shelby said carelessly:

"By the by, Arthur, who was that low-bred fellow that you lugged in to our dinner-table to-day?"

"Haley is his name," said Shelby, turning himself rather uneasily in his chair, and continuing with his eyes fixed on a letter.

"Is he a negro trader?" said Mrs. Shelby, noticing a certain embarrassment in her husband's manner.

"Why, my dear, what put that into your head?" said Shelby, looking up.

"Nothing—only Eliza came in here, after dinner, in a great worry, crying and taking on, and said you were talking with a trader, and that she heard him make an offer for her boy—the ridiculous little goose! I told Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby, as she continued brushing her hair, "that she was a little fool for her pains, and that you never had anything to do with that sort of person. Of course, I knew you never meant to sell any of our people—least of all, to such a fellow."

"Well, Emily," said her husband, "so I have always

felt and said ; but the fact is, my business lies so that I cannot get on without. I shall have to sell some of my hands. I've agreed to sell Tom."

" What ! our Tom ?—that good faithful creature !—been your faithful servant from a boy ! Oh, Mr. Shelby !—and you have promised him his freedom, too—you and I have spoken to him a hundred times of it ! Well, I can believe anything now ; I can believe *now* that you could sell little Harry, poor Eliza's only child ! " said Mrs. Shelby, in a tone between grief and indignation.

" Well, since you must know all, it is so. I have agreed to sell Tom and Harry both ; and I don't know why I am to be rated as if I were a monster for doing what every one does every day. I can't help myself."

" Why not make a pecuniary sacrifice ? I'm willing to bear my part of the inconvenience. O Mr. Shelby ! I have tried—tried most faithfully, as a Christian woman should—to do my duty to these poor, simple, dependent creatures. I have cared for them, instructed them, watched over them, and known all their little cares and joys, for years ; and how can I ever hold up my head again among them, if, for the sake of a little paltry gain, we sell such a faithful, excellent, confiding creature as poor Tom, and tear from him in a moment all we have taught him to love and value ? I have taught them the duties of the family, of parent and child, and husband and wife ; and how can I bear to have this open acknowledgment that we care for no tie, no duty, no relation, however sacred, compared with money ? I have talked with Eliza about her boy—her duty to him as a Christian mother, to watch over him, pray for him, and bring him up in a Christian way ; and now what can I say, if you tear him away, and sell him, soul and body, to a profane, unprincipled man, just to save a little money ? I have told her that one soul is worth more than all the money in the world ; and how will she believe me when she sees us turn round and sell her child ?—sell him, perhaps, to certain ruin of body and soul ! "

" I'm sorry you feel so about it, Emily—indeed I am," said Mr. Shelby ; " but I tell you now, solemnly, it's of no use—I can't help myself. Either they must go, or *all* must. Haley has come into possession of a mortgage

which, if I don't clear off with him directly, will take everything before it. I've raked, and scraped, and borrowed, and all but begged, and the price of these two was needed to make up the balance, and I had to give them up. Haley fancied the child ; he agreed to settle the matter that way, and no other. I was in his power, and *had* to do it. If you feel so to have them sold, would it be any better to have *all* sold ? "

Mrs. Shelby stood like one stricken. Finally, turning to her toilet, she rested her face in her hands and gave a sort of groan.

" This is God's curse on slavery !—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing !—a curse to the master and a curse to the slave ! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours ; I always felt it was—I always thought so when I was a girl—I thought so still more after I joined the church ; but I thought I could gild it over—I thought, by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom—fool that I was ! I haven't any jewellery of any amount," she added thoughtfully ; " but would not this watch do something ?—it was an expensive one when it was bought. If I could only, at least, save Eliza's child, I would sacrifice anything I have."

" I'm sorry, very sorry, Emily," said Mr. Shelby. " I'm sorry this takes hold of you so ; but it will do no good. The fact is, Emily the thing's done ; the bills of sale are already signed, and in Haley's hands ; and you must be thankful it is no worse. That man has had it in his power to ruin us all, and now he is fairly off. If you knew the man as I do, you'd think that we had had a narrow escape.'"

" This wretch owns that good, faithful Tom, and Eliza's child ? "

" Well, my dear, the fact is, that this goes rather hard with me—it's a thing I hate to think of : Haley wants to drive matters, and take possession to-morrow. I'm going to get out my horse bright and early, and be off. I can't see Tom, that's a fact ; and you had better arrange a drive somewhere, and carry Eliza off. Let the thing be done when she is out of sight."

"No, no," said Mrs. Shelby; "I'll be in no sense accomplice or help in this cruel business. I'll go and see poor old Tom, God help him in his distress! They shall see, at any rate, that their mistress can feel for and with them. As to Eliza, I dare not think about it. The Lord forgive us! What have we done that this cruel necessity should come on us?"

There was one listener to this conversation whom Mr. and Mrs. Shelby little suspected.

Communicating with their apartment was a large closet, opening by a door into the outer passage. When Mrs. Shelby had dismissed Eliza for the night, her feverish and excited mind had suggested the idea of this closet; and she had hidden herself there, and, with her ear pressed close against the crack of the door, had lost not a word of the conversation.

When the voices died into silence, she rose and crept stealthily away. Pale, shivering, with rigid features and compressed lips, she looked an entirely altered being from the soft and timid creature she had been hitherto. She moved cautiously along the entry, paused one moment at her mistress's door, and raised her hands in mute appeal to Heaven, and then turned and glided into her own room. It was a quiet, neat apartment, on the same floor with her mistress's. Here was her home, and, on the whole, a happy one it had been to her. But there, on the bed, lay her slumbering boy, his long curls falling negligently around his unconscious face, his rosy mouth half open, his little fat hands thrown out over the bed-clothes, and a smile spread like a sunbeam over his whole face.

"Poor boy! poor fellow!" said Eliza; "they have sold you; but your mother will save you yet!"

She took a piece of paper and a pencil, and wrote hastily:

"Oh, missis! dear missis! don't think me ungrateful—don't think hard of me, any way! I heard all you and master said to-night. I am going to try to save my boy—you will not blame me! God bless and reward you for all your kindness!"

Hastily folding and directing this, she went to a drawer and made up a little package of clothing for her boy, which she tied with a handkerchief firmly round her waist; and

so fond is a mother's remembrance that, even in the terrors of that hour, she did not forget to put in the little package one or two of his favourite toys, reserving a gaily-painted parrot to amuse him when she should be called on to awaken him. It was some trouble to arouse the little sleeper; but, after some effort, he sat up, and was playing with his bird, while his mother was putting on her bonnet and shawl.

"Where are you going, mother?" said he, as she drew near the bed with his little coat and cap.

"Hush! Harry," she said; "mustn't speak loud, or they will hear us. A wicked man was coming to take little Harry away from his mother and carry him 'way off in the dark; but mother won't let him. She's going to put on her little boy's cap and coat, and run off with him, so the ugly man can't catch him."

Saying these words, she had tied and buttoned on the child's simple outfit and, taking him in her arms, she whispered to him to be very still; and, opening a door in her room, which led into the outer verandah, she glided noiselessly out.

It was a sparkling, frosty, starlight night, and the mother wrapped the shawl close round her child, as, perfectly quiet with vague terror, he clung round her neck. A few minutes brought them to the window of Uncle Tom's cottage, and Eliza stopping, tapped lightly at the window-pane.

The prayer-meeting at Uncle Tom's had, in the order of hymn-singing, been protracted to a very late hour; and as Uncle Tom had indulged himself in a few lengthy solos afterwards, the consequence was that, although it was now between twelve and one o'clock, he and his worthy help-meet were not yet asleep.

"Good Lord! what's that?" said Aunt Chloe, starting up, and hastily drawing the curtain. "My sakes alive, if it an't Lizy! Get on your clothes, old man, quick! I'm gwine to open the door."

And, suiting the action to the word, the door flew open, and the light of the tallow candle, which Tom had hastily lighted, fell on the haggard face and dark eyes of the fugitive.

"Lord bless you! I'm skeered to look at ye, Lizy! Are ye tuck sick, or what's come over ye?"

"I'm running away, Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe—carrying off my child. Master sold him!"

"Sold him?" echoed both, lifting up their hands in dismay.

"Yes, sold him!" said Eliza firmly. I crept into the closet by mistress's door to-night, and I heard master tell missis that he had sold my Harry and you, Uncle Tom, both to a trader, and that he was going off this morning on his horse, and that the man was to take possession to-day."

Tom had stood during this speech with his hands raised, and his eyes dilated, like a man in a dream. Slowly and gradually, as its meaning came over him, he collapsed, rather than seated himself, on his old chair, and sank his head down upon his knees.

"The good Lord have pity on us!" said Aunt Chloe. "Oh, it don't seem as if it was true! What has he done that mas'r should sell him?"

"He hasn't done anything—it isn't for that. Master don't want to sell, and missis—she's always good. I heard her plead and beg for us; but he told her 'twas no use—that he was in this man's debt, and that this man had got the power over him—and that if he didn't pay him off clear, it would end in his having to sell the place and all the people and move off. Yes, I heard him say there was no choice between selling these two and selling all; the man was driving them so hard. Master said he was sorry; but oh, missis! you ought to have heard her talk! If she an't a Christian and an angel, there never was one. I'm a wicked girl to leave her so; but then I can't help it. She said herself one soul was worth more than the world; and this boy has a soul, and if I let him be carried off, who knows what'll become of it? It must be right; but if it an't right, the Lord forgive me, for I can't help doing it."

"Well, old man!" said Aunt Chloe, "why don't you go too? Will you wait to be toted down river, where they kill niggers with hard work and starving? I'd a heap rather die than go there, any day! There's time for ye; be off with Lizy—you've got a pass to come and go any time. Come, bustle up, and I'll get your things together."

Tom slowly raised his hand, and looked sorrowfully but quietly around, and said :

" No, no ; I an't going. Let Eliza go—it's her right. I wouldn't be the one to say no. 'Tan't in *natur'* for her to stay ; but you heard what she said ! If I must be sold, or all the people on the place, and everything go to rack, why, let me be sold. I s'pose I can b'ar it as well as any on 'em," he added while something like a sob and a sigh shook his broad, rough chest convulsively. " Mas'r always found me on the spot—he always will. I never have broke trust, nor used my pass no ways contrary to my word, and I never will. It's better for me alone to go than to break up the place and sell all. Mas'r an't to blame, Chloe ; and he'll take care of you and the poor——"

Here he turned to the rough trundle-bed full of little woolly heads, and broke fairly down. He leaned over the back of the chair, and covered his face with his large hands. Sobs, heavy, hoarse, and loud, shook the chair, and great tears fell through his fingers on the floor.

" And now," said Eliza, as she stood in the door, " I saw my husband only this afternoon, and I little knew then what was to come. They have pushed him to the very last standing-place, and he told me to-day that he was going to run away. Do try, if you can, to get word to him. Tell him how I went, and why I went ; and tell him I'm going to try and find Canada. You must give my love to him, and tell him if I never see him again," she turned away, and stood with her back to them for a moment and then added, in a husky voice, " tell him to be as good as he can, and try and meet me in the kingdom of heaven."

A few last words and tears, a few simple adieus and blessings, and, clasping her wondering and affrighted child in her arms, she glided noiselessly away.

CHAPTER VI.

DISCOVERY.

I WONDER what keeps Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby the ollowing morning, after giving her bell repeated pulls, to o purpose.

Mr. Shelby was standing before his dressing-glass, sharpning his razor; and just then the door opened, and a oloured boy entered with his shaving-water.

"Andy," said his mistress, "step to Eliza's door, and tell er I have rung for her three times. Poor thing!" she ilded, to herself, with a sigh.

Andy soon returned, with eyes very wide in astonishent.

"Lor, missis! Lizy's drawers is all open, and her ings all laying every which way; and I believe she's ist done clared out!"

The truth flashed upon Mr. Shelby and his wife at the same oment. He exclaimed:

"Then she suspected, and she's off!"

"The Lord be thanked!" said Mrs. Shelby. "I trust e is."

"Wife, you talk like a fool! Really, it will be someing pretty awkward for me, if she is. Haley saw that I esitated about selling this child, and he'll think I conved at it to get him out of the way. It touches my onour!" And Mr. Shelby left the room hastily.

There was great running and ejaculating, and opening nd shutting of doors, and the appearance of faces in all ades of colour in different places, for about a quarter of n hour.

Very soon about a dozen young imps were roosting, like so any crows, on the verandah railings, each one determined be the first one to apprise the strange mas'r of his ill ck.

"I say now, Shelby, this yer's a most extr'or'nary siness!" said Haley, as he abruptly entered the parlour. It seems that gal's off, with her young un."

"Sir," said Mr. Shelby, "if you wish to communicate with me, you must observe something of the decorum of a gentleman. Andy, take Mr. Haley's hat and riding-whip. Take a seat, sir; I regret to say that the young woman, excited by overhearing, or having reported to her, something of this business, has taken her child in the night, and made off."

"I did expect fair dealing in this matter, I confess," said Haley.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Shelby, turning sharply round upon him, "what am I to understand by that remark? If any man calls my honour in question, I have but one answer for him."

The trader cowered at this, and in a somewhat low tone said that "it was plaguy hard on a fellow, that had made a fair bargain, to be gulled in that way."

"Mr. Haley," said Mr. Shelby, "if I did not think you had some cause for disappointment I should not have borne from you the rude and unceremonious style of your entrance into my parlour this morning. I say thus much, however, since appearances call for it, that I shall allow of no insinuations cast upon me, as if I were at all partner to any unfairness in this matter. Moreover, I shall feel bound to give you every assistance, in the use of horses, servants, etc., in the recovery of your property. So, in short, Haley," said he, suddenly dropping from the tone of dignified coolness to his ordinary one of easy frankness, "the best way for you is to keep good-natured and eat some breakfast, and we will then see what is to be done."

Mrs. Shelby now rose, and said her engagements would prevent her being at the breakfast-table that morning; and deputing a very respectable mulatto woman to attend to the gentlemen's coffee at the sideboard, she left the room.

Never did fall of any prime minister at court occasion wider surges of sensation than the report of Tom's fate among his compeers on the place. It was the topic in every mouth, everywhere; and nothing was done in the house or in the field, but to discuss its probable results. Eliza's flight—an unprecedented event on the place—was also a great accessory in stimulating the general excitement.

Black Sam, as he was commonly called, from his being about three shades blacker than any other son of ebony

on the place, was revolving the matter profoundedly in all its phases and bearings, with a comprehensiveness of vision and a strict look-out to his own personal well-being that would have done credit to any white patriot in Washington.

"It's an ill wind dat blows nohwar—dat ar a fact," said Sam sententiously, giving an additional hoist to his pantaloons and adroitly substituting a long nail in place of a missing suspender-button, with which effort of mechanical genius he seemed highly delighted.

"Yes, it's an ill wind blows nowhar," he repeated. "Now, dar, Tom's down. Wal, course der's room for some nigger to be up; and why not dis nigger?—dat's de idee. Tom, a-ridin' round de country—boots blacked—pass in his pocket—all grand as Cuffee; who but he? Now, why shouldn't Sam?—dat's what I want to know."

"Halloo, Sam—O Sam! Mas'r wants you to catch Bill and Jerry," said Andy, cutting short Sam's soliloquy.

"High! What's afoot now, young un?"

"Why, you don't know, I s'pose, that Lizy's cut stick, and clared out with her young un?"

"You teach your granny!" said Sam, with infinite contempt. "Knowed it a heap sight sooner that you did; this nigger an't so green, now!"

"Well, anyhow, mas'r wants Bill and Jerry geared right up; and you and I's to go with Mas'r Haley, to look arter her."

"Good, now; dat's de time o' day!" said Sam. "It's Sam dat's called for in dese yer times. He's de nigger. See if I don't cotch her now; mas'r 'll see what Sam can do!"

"Ah! but, Sam," said Andy, "you'd better think twice; for missis don't want her cotched, and she'll be in your wool."

"High!" said Sam, opening his eyes. "How you know dat?"

"Heard her say so, my own self, dis blessed mornin', when I bring in mas'r's shaving-water. She sent me to see why Lizy didn't come to dress her; and when I telled her she was off, she just ris up, and ses she, 'The Lord be praised!' and mas'r he seemed real mad, and ses he, 'Wife, you talk like a fool!' But Lor, she'll bring him to! I knows well

enough how that'll be—it's allers best to stand missis' side the fence, now I tell yer."

Black Sam, upon this, scratched his woolly pate, and gave a hitch to his pantaloons, which was his regular organised method of assisting his mental perplexities.

"Can't you see through a ladder, ye black nigger? Missis don't want dis yer Mas'r Haley to get Lizy's boy; dat's de go!"

"High!" said Sam, with an indescribable intonation, known only to those who have heard it among the negroes.

"And I tell you more'n all," said Andy; "I specs you'd better be making tracks for dem hosses—mighty sudden, too!—for I hearn missis' 'quirin' arter yer—so you've stood foolin' long enough."

Sam, upon this, began to bestir himself in real earnest, and after a while appeared, bearing down gloriously towards the house, with Bill and Jerry in a full canter, and adroitly throwing himself off before they had any idea of stopping, he brought them up alongside of the horse-post like a tornado. Haley's horse, which was a skittish young colt, winced and bounced, and pulled hard at his halter.

"Ho, ho!" said Sam, "skeery, are ye?" and his black visage lighted up with a curious, mischievous gleam. "I'll fix ye, now," said he.

There was a large beech-tree overshadowing the place, and the small, sharp, triangular beech-nuts lay scattered thickly on the ground. With one of these in his fingers, Sam approached the colt, stroked and patted, and seemed apparently busy in soothing his agitation. On pretence of adjusting the saddle, he adroitly slipped under it the sharp little nut, in such a manner that the least weight upon the saddle would annoy the nervous sensibilities of the animal, without leaving any perceptible graze or wound.

"Dar!" he said, rolling his eyes with an approving grin; "me fix 'em!"

At this moment Mrs. Shelby appeared on the balcony, beckoning to him.

"Well, Sam, you are to go with Mr. Haley to show him the road, and help him. Be careful of the horses, Sam, you know Jerry was a little lame last week; *don't ride them too fast.*"

Mrs. Shelby spoke the last words with a low voice, and strong emphasis.

"Let dis child alone for dat!" said Sam, rolling up his eyes with a volume of meaning. "Yes, missis, I'll look for de hosses!"

At this instant, Haley appeared on the verandah. Somewhat mollified by certain cups of very good coffee, he came out smiling and talking, in tolerably restored humour. Sam and Andy, clawing for certain fragmentary palm-leaves, which they were in the habit of considering as hats, flew to the horse-posts, to be ready to "help mas'r."

"Well, boys," said Haley, "look alive now; we must lose no time."

"Not a bit of him, mas'r!" said Sam, putting Haley's rein in his hand, and holding his stirrup, while Andy was untying the other two horses.

The instant Haley touched the saddle, the mettlesome creature bounded from the earth with a sudden spring that threw his master sprawling, some feet off, on the soft, dry turf. Sam, with frantic ejaculations, made a dive at the reins, but only succeeded in brushing the palm-leaf aforenamed into the horse's eyes, which by no means tended to allay the confusion of his nerves. So, with great vehemence, he overturned Sam, and giving two or three contemptuous snorts, flourished his heels vigorously in the air and was soon prancing away towards the lower end of the lawn, followed by Bill and Jerry, whom Andy had not failed to let loose, speeding them off with various direful ejaculations. And now ensued a miscellaneous scene of confusion. Sam and Andy ran and shouted, dogs barked here and there, and Mike, Mose, Mandy, Fanny, and all the smaller specimens on the place, both male and female, raced, clapped hands, whooped and shouted, with outrageous officiousness and untiring zeal.

Haley's horse, which was a white one, and very fleet and spirited, appeared to enter into the spirit of the scene with great gusto; and having for his coursing ground a lawn of nearly half a mile in extent, gently sloping down on every side into indefinite woodland, he appeared to take infinite delight in seeing how near he could allow his pursuers to approach him, and then, when within a hand's breadth,

whisk off with a start and a snort, like a mischievous beast as he was, and career far down into some alley of the wood-lot. Nothing was farther from Sam's mind than to have any one of the troop taken until such season as should seem to him most befitting, and the exertions that he made were certainly most heroic. Like the sword of Cœur de Lion, which always blazed in the front of the thickest of the battle, Sam's palm-leaf was to be seen everywhere when there was the least danger that a horse could be caught; there he would bear down full tilt, shouting, "Now for it! Cotch him! Cotch him!" in a way that would set everything to indiscriminate rout in a moment.

Haley ran up and down, and cursed and swore, and stamped miscellaneously. Mr. Shelby in vain tried to shout directions from the balcony; and Mrs. Shelby from her chamber window alternately laughed and wondered, not without some inkling of what lay at the bottom of all this confusion.

At last, about twelve o'clock, Sam appeared triumphant, mounted on Jerry, with Haley's horse by his side, reeking with sweat, but with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils, showing that the spirit of freedom had not yet entirely subsided.

"He's cotched!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "If 't hadn't been for me, they might a bust theirselves, all on 'em; but I cotched him!"

"You!" growled Haley in no amiable mood. "If 't hadn't been for you, this never would have happened."

"Lord bless us, mas'r!" said Sam, in a tone of the deepest concern; "and me that has been racin' and chasin' till the sweat jest pours off me!"

"Well, well!" said Haley, "you've lost me near three hours, with your cursed nonsense. Now let's be off, and have no more fooling."

"Why, mas'r," said Sam, in a deprecating tone, "I believe you mean to kill us all clar, horses and all. Here we were all just ready to drop down, and the critters all in a reek of sweat. Why, mas'r won't think of startin' on now till arter dinner. Mas'r's hoss wants rubbin' down; see how he's splashed hisself; and Jerry limps too; don't think missis would be willin' to have us start dis yer way,

no how. Lord bless you, mas'r, we can ketch up, if we do stop! Lizy never was no great of a walker."

Mrs. Shelby, who, greatly to her amusement, had overheard this conversation from the verandah, now resolved to do her part. She came forward, and courteously expressing her concern for Haley's accident, pressed him to stay to dinner, saying that the cook should bring it on the table immediately.

Thus, all things considered, Haley, with rather an equivocal grace, proceeded to the parlour, while Sam, rolling his eyes after him with unutterable meaning, proceeded gravely with the horses to the stable-yard.

"Did yer see missis up stars at the winder? I seed her laughin'," said Sam.

"I'm sure, I was racin' so, I didn't see nothing," said Andy.

"Well, yer see," said Sam, proceeding gravely to wash down Haley's pony, "I'se 'quired what yer may call a habit o' '*bobservation*,' Andy. It's a very 'portant habit, Andy; and I 'commend yer to be cultivatin' it now yer young. Hist up that hind foot, Andy. Yer see, Andy, it's *bobservation* makes all de difference in niggers. Didn't I see which way the wind blew dis yer mornin'? Didn't I see what missis wanted, though she never let on? Dat ar's bobservation, Andy. I 'spects it's what you may call a faculty. Faculties is different in different peoples, but cultivation of 'em goes a great way."

"I guess if I hadn't helped your bobservation dis mornin', yer wouldn't have seen your way so smart," said Andy.

"Andy," said Sam, "you's a promisin' child, der an't no manner o' doubt. I think lots of yer, Andy; and I don't feel no ways ashamed to take idees from you. We oughtenter overlook nobody, Andy, 'cause the smartest on us gets tripped up sometimes. And so, Andy, let's go up to the house now. I'll be boun' missis 'll give us an uncommon good bite dis yer time."

CHAPTER VII

THE MOTHER'S STRUGGLE

It is impossible to conceive a human creature more wholly desolate and forlorn than Eliza, when she turned her footsteps from Uncle Tom's cabin.

Her boy was old enough to have walked by her side, and, in an indifferent case, she would only have led him by the hand ; but now the bare thought of putting him out of her arms made her shudder, and she strained him to her bosom with a convulsive grasp, as she went rapidly forward.

The frosty ground creaked beneath her feet, and she trembled at the sound ; every quaking leaf and fluttering shadow sent the blood backward to her heart, and quickened her footsteps. She wondered within herself at the strength that seemed to be come upon her ; for she felt the weight of her boy as if it had been a feather, and every flutter of fear seemed to increase the supernatural power that bore her on, while from her pale lips burst forth, in frequent ejaculations, the prayer to a Friend above, " Lord, help—Lord, save me !"

The child slept. At first, the novelty and alarm kept him waking ; but his mother so hurriedly repressed every breath or sound, and so assured him that if he were only still she would certainly save him, that he clung quietly round her neck and gradually slept !

The boundaries of the farm, the grove, the wood-lot, passed by her dizzily, as she walked on ; and still she went, leaving one familiar object after another, slacking not, pausing not, till reddening daylight found her many a long mile from all traces of any familiar objects upon the open highway.

She had often been, with her mistress, to visit some connexions, in the little village of T——, not far from the Ohio River, and knew the road well. To go thither, to escape across the Ohio River, were the first hurried outlines of her plan of escape ; beyond that she could only hope in God.

When horses and vehicles began to move along the high-

way, with that alert perception peculiar to a state of excitement, and which seems to be a sort of inspiration, she became aware that her headlong pace and distracted air might bring on her remark and suspicion. She therefore put the boy on the ground, and, adjusting her dress and bonnet she walked on at as rapid a pace as she thought consistent with the preservation of appearances.

After a while, they came to a thick patch of woodland, through which murmured a clear brook. As the child complained of hunger and thirst, she climbed over the fence with him; and, sitting down behind a large rock which concealed them from the road, she gave him a breakfast out of her little package.

She was many miles past any neighbourhood where she was personally known. She stopped at noon at a neat farmhouse, to rest herself, and buy some dinner for her child and self; for, as the danger decreased with the distance, the supernatural tension of the nervous system lessened, and she found herself both weary and hungry.

An hour before sunset, she entered the village of T——, by the Ohio River, weary and footsore, but still strong in heart. Her first glance was at the river, which lay, like Jordan, between her and the Canaan of liberty on the other side.

It was now early spring, and the river was swollen and turbulent; great cakes of floating ice were swinging heavily to and fro in the turbid waters. Owing to the peculiar form of the shore on the Kentucky side, the land bending far out into the water, the ice had been lodged and detained in great quantities, and the narrow channel which swept round the bend was full of ice, piled one cake over another, thus forming a temporary barrier to the descending ice, which lodged, and formed a great undulating raft, filling up the whole river, and extending almost to the Kentucky shore.

Eliza stood for a moment, contemplating this unfavourable aspect of things, which she saw at once must prevent the usual ferry-boat from running, and then turned into a small public-house on the bank, to make a few inquiries.

The hostess, who was busy in various fizzing and stewing operations, over the fire, preparatory to the evening meal, stopped, with a fork in her hand, as Eliza's sweet and plaintive voice arrested her.

"What is it?" she said.

"Isn't there a ferry or boat that takes people over to B——y, now?" she said.

"No, indeed!" said the woman; "the boat has stopped running."

Eliza's look of dismay and disappointment struck the woman, and she said:

"There's a man a piece down here that's going over with some truck this evening, if he durs' to; he'll be in here to supper to-night, so you'd better set down and wait. That's a sweet little fellow," added the woman, offering him a cake.

But the child, wholly exhausted, cried with weariness.

"Poor fellow! he isn't used to walking, and I've hurried him on so," said Eliza.

"Well, take him into this room," said the woman, indicating into a small bedroom, where stood a comfortable bed. Eliza laid the weary boy upon it, and held his hands in hers till he was fast asleep. For her there was no rest. As a fire in her bones, the thought of the pursuer urged her on; and she gazed with longing eyes on the sullen, surging waters that lay between her and liberty.

Here we must take our leave of her for the present, to follow the course of her pursuers.

Though Mrs. Shelby had promised that the dinner should be hurried on table, yet it was soon seen, as the thing has often been seen before, that it required more than one to make a bargain. So, although the order was fairly given out in Haley's hearing, and carried to Aunt Chloe by at least half a dozen juvenile messengers, that dignitary only gave certain very gruff snorts and tosses of her head, and went on with every operation in an unusually leisurely and circumstantial manner.

For some singular reason, an impression seemed to reign among the servants generally that missis would not be particularly disobliged by delay; and it was wonderful what a number of counter accidents occurred constantly, to retard the course of things. One luckless wight contrived to upset the gravy; and then gravy had to be got up *de novo*,

with due care and formality, Aunt Chloe, watching and stirring with dogged precision, answering shortly, to all suggestions of haste, that she "warn't a-going to have raw gravy on the table, to help nobody's catchings." One tumbled down with the water, and had to go to the spring for more; and another precipitated the butter into the path of events; and there was, from time to time, giggling news brought into the kitchen that "Mas'r Haley was mighty oneasy, and that he couldn't sit in his cheer no ways, but was a-walkin' and stalkin' to the winders and through the porch."

Tom was summoned to the parlour.

"Tom," said his master kindly, "I want you to notice that I give this gentleman bonds to forfeit a thousand dollars if you are not on the spot when he wants you; he's going to-day to look after his other business, and you can have the day to yourself. Go anywhere you like, boy."

"Thank you, mas'r," said Tom.

"And mind yerself," said the trader, "and don't you come it over your master with any o' yer nigger tricks; for I'll take every cent out of him, if you an't thar. If he'd hear to me, he wouldn't trust any on ye—slippery as eels!"

"Mas'r," said Tom—as he stood very straight—"I was jist eight years old when ole missis put you into my arms, and you wasn't a year old. 'Thar,' says she, 'Tom, that's to be *your* young mas'r; take good care on him,' say she. And now I jist ask you, mas'r, have I ever broke word to you, or gone contrary to you, 'specially since I was a Christian?"

Mr. Shelby was fairly overcome, and the tears rose to his eyes.

"My good boy," said he, "the Lord knows you say but the truth; and if I was able to help it, all the world shouldn't buy you."

"And sure as I'm a Christian woman," said Mrs. Shelby, "you shall be redeemed as soon as I can any way bring together means. "Sir," she said to Haley, "take good account of who you sell him to, and let me know."

"Lor, yes, for that matter," said the trader, "I may bring him up in a year, not much the wuss for wear, and trade him back."

"I'll trade with you, then, and make it for your advantage," said Mrs. Shelby.

"Of course," said the trader, "all equal with me; li'ves trade 'em up as down, so I does a good business. All I want is a livin', you know, ma'am; that's all any on us wants, I s'pose."

At two o'clock Sam and Andy brought the horses up to the posts, apparently greatly refreshed and invigorated by the scamper of the morning.

Sam was there new oiled from dinner, with an abundance of zealous and ready officiousness. As Haley approached, he was boasting, in flourishing style, to Andy, of the evident and eminent success of the operation, now that he had "fa'rly come to it."

"Your master, I s'pose, don't keep no dogs?" said Haley thoughtfully, as he prepared to mount.

"Heaps on 'em," said Sam triumphantly; "thar's Bruno—he's a roarer! and, besides that, 'bout every nigger on us keeps a pup of some natur' or other."

"Poh!" said Haley—and he said something else, too, with regard to the said dogs, at which Sam muttered:

"I don't see no use cussin' on 'em, no way."

"But your master don't keep no dogs (I pretty much know he don't) for trackin' out niggers?"

Sam knew exactly what he meant, but he kept on a look of earnest and desperate simplicity.

"Our dogs all smells round considerable sharp. I 'spect they's the kind, though they han't never had no practice. They's *far* dogs, though, at most anything, if you'd get 'em started. Here, Bruno," he called, whistling to the lumbering Newfoundland, who came pitching tumultuously toward them.

"You go hang!" said Haley, getting up. "Come, tumble up, now."

Sam tumbled up accordingly, dexterously contriving to tickle Andy as he did so, which occasioned Andy to split out into a laugh, greatly to Haley's indignation, who made a cut at him with his riding-whip.

"I's stonished at yer, Andy," said Sam, with awful gravity. "This yer's a seris business, Andy. Yer mustn't be a-makin' game. This yer an't no way to help mas'r."

"I shall take the straight road to the river," said Haley decidedly, after they had come to the boundaries of the estate, "I know the way of all of 'em—they make tracks for the underground."

"Sartin," said Sam, "dat's de idee. Mas'r Haley hits de right thing in de middle. Now, der's two roads to de river—de dirt road and der pike—which mas'r mean to take?"

Andy looked up innocently at Sam, surprised at hearing this new geographical fact, but instantly confirmed what he said by a vehement reiteration.

"'Cause," said Sam, "I'd rather be 'clined to 'magine that Liz'd take de dirt road, bein' it's the least travelled."

Haley, notwithstanding that he was a very old bird, and naturally inclined to be suspicious of chaff, was rather brought up by this view of the case.

"If yer warn't both on yer such cussed liars, now!" said he contemplatively, as he pondered a moment.

"Course," said Sam, "mas'r can do as he'd ruther; go de straight road, if mas'r think best—it's all one to us. Now, when I study 'pon it, I think de straight road de best *deridedly*."

"She would naturally go a lonesome way," said Haley, thinking aloud, not minding Sam's remark.

"The dirt road begins a little piece ahead," said Sam, giving a wink to Andy with the eye which was on Andy's side of the head; and he added gravely, "but I've studded on de matter, and I'm quite clar we ought not to go dat ar way. I nebber been over it no way. It's despit lonesome, and we might lose our way. Whar we'd come to, de Lord only knows."

"Nevertheless," said Haley, "I shall go that way."

"Now I think on't, I think I hearn 'em tell that dat ar road was all fenced up and down by der creek, and thar; an't it, Andy?"

Andy wasn't certain, he'd only "hearn tell" about that road, but never been over it. In short, he was strictly non-committal.

Haley, accustomed to strike the balance of probabilities between lies of greater or lesser magnitude, thought that it lay in favour of the dirt road aforesaid. The mention of

the thing he thought he perceived was involuntary on Sam's part at first; and his confused attempts to dissuade him he set down to a desperate lying, on second thoughts, as being unwilling to implicate Eliza. When, therefore, Sam indicated the road, Haley plunged briskly into it, followed by Sam and Andy.

Now, the road in fact was an old one that had formerly been a thoroughfare to the river, but abandoned for many years after the laying of the new pike. It was open for about an hour's ride, and after that it was cut across by various farms and fences. Sam knew this fact perfectly well; indeed, the road had been so long closed up that Andy had never heard of it. He therefore rode along with an air of dutiful submission, only groaning and vociferating occasionally that 'twas "desp't rough, and bad for Jerry's foot."

"Now, I jest give yer warning!" said Haley. "I know yer; yer won't get me to turn off this yer road, with all yer fussin'—so you shet up."

"Mas'r will go his own way!" said Sam, with rueful submission, at the same time winking most portentously to Andy, whose delight was now very near the explosive point.

After riding about an hour in this way, the whole party made a precipitate and tumultuous descent into a barn-yard belonging to a large farming establishment. Not a soul was in sight, all the hands being employed in the fields; but, as the barn stood conspicuously and plainly square across the road, it was evident that their journey in that direction had reached a decided *finale*.

"Wan't dat ar what I telled mas'r?" said Sam, with an air of injured innocence. "How does strange gentlemen spect to know more about a country dan de natives born and raised?"

"You rascal!" said Haley; "you knew all about this!"

"Didn't I tell yer I know'd, and yer wouldn't believe me? I tell'd mas'r 'twas all shet up, and fenced up, and I didn't spect we could get through—Andy heard me."

It was all too true to be disputed, and the unlucky man had to pocket his wrath with the best grace he was able,

and all three faced to the right-about, and took up their line of march for the highway.

In consequence of all the various delays, it was about three-quarters of an hour after Eliza had laid her child to sleep in the village tavern that the party came riding into the same place. Eliza was standing by the window, looking out in another direction, when Sam's quick eye caught a glimpse of her. Haley and Andy were two yards behind. At this crisis Sam contrived to have his hat blown off, and uttered a loud and characteristic ejaculation, which startled her at once; she drew suddenly back; the whole train swept by the window, round to the front door.

A thousand lives seemed to be concentrated in that one moment to Eliza. Her room opened by a side door to the river. She caught her child, and sprang down the steps towards it. The trader caught a full glimpse of her, just as she was disappearing down the bank; and throwing himself from his horse, and calling loudly on Sam and Andy, he was after her like a hound after a deer. In that dizzy moment her feet to her scarce seemed to touch the ground, and a moment brought her to the water's edge. Right on behind they came; and, nerved with strength such as God gives only to the desperate, with one wild and flying leap, she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond. It was a desperate leap —impossible to anything but madness and despair; and Haley, Sam, and Andy instinctively cried out and lifted up their hands as she did it.

The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted pitched and creaked as her weight came on it, but she stayed there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake: stumbling, leaping, slipping, springing upwards again! Her shoes are gone——her stockings cut from her feet—while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, felt nothing, till dimly, as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side, and a man helping her up the bank.

"Yer a brave gal, now, whoever ye are!" said the man, with an oath.

Eliza recognised the voice and face of a man who owned a farm not far from her old home.

"O Mr. Symmes, save me—do save me—do hide me!" said Eliza.

"Why, what's this?" said the man. "Why, if 'tain't Shelby's gal!"

"My child!—this boy—he's sold him! There is his mas'r," said she, pointing to the Kentucky shore. "O Mr. Symmes, you've got a little boy."

"So I have," said the man, as he roughly but kindly drew her up the steep bank. "Besides, you're a right brave gal. I like grit wherever I see it!"

When they had gained the top of the bank, the man paused.

"I'd be glad to do something for ye," said he; "but then there's nowhar I could take ye. The best I can do is to tell ye to go *thar*," said he, pointing to a large white house which stood by itself, off the main street of the village. "Go thar; they're kind folks. Thar's no kind o' danger but they'll help you—they're up to all that sort o' thing."

"The Lord bless you!" said Eliza earnestly.

"No 'casion, no 'casion in the world," said the man. "What I've done's of no 'count."

"And, oh, surely, sir, you won't tell any one!"

"Go to thunder, gal! What do you take a feller for? In course not," said the man. "Come now, go along like a likely sensible gal, as you are. You've arnt your liberty, and you shall have it, for all me."

The woman folded her child to her bosom, and walked firmly and swiftly away.

Haley had stood a perfectly amazed spectator of the scene, till Eliza had disappeared up the bank, when he turned a blank, inquiring look on Sam and Andy.

"That ar was a tolable fair stroke of business," said Sam.

"The gal's got seven devils in her, I believe," said Haley. "How like a wild cat she jumped!"

"Wal, now," said Sam, scratching his head, "I hope mas'r'll 'scuse us tryin' dat ar road. Don't think I feel spry enough for dat ar, no way!" and Sam gave a hoarse chuckle.

"*You* laugh!" said the trader, with a growl.

"Lord bless you, mas'r, I couldn't help it, now," said Sam, giving way to the long pent-up delight of his soul.

" She looked so curis, a-leapin' and springin'—ice a-crackin' —and only to hear her—plump ! ker chunk ! ker splash ! Spring ! Lord, how she goes it ! " and Sam and Andy laughed till the tears rolled down their cheeks.

" I'll make ye laugh t'other side yer mouths ! " said the trader, laying about their heads with his riding-whip.

Both ducked, and ran shouting up the bank, and were on their horses before he was up.

" Good evening, mas'r ! " said Sam, with much gravity. " I bery much 'spect missis be anxious 'bout Jerry. Mas'r Haley won't want us no longer. Missis wouldn't hear of our ridin' the critters over Lizy's bridge to-night " ; and, with a facetious poke into Andy's ribs, he started off, followed by the latter at full-speed—their shouts of laughter coming faintly on the winds.

CHAPTER VIII

MRS. SHELBY IS TOLD

Sam and Andy, in a state of high felicitation, pursued their way home until, between ten and eleven, their heels resounded on the gravel at the end of the balcony. Mrs. Shelby flew to the railings.

" Is that you, Sam ? Where are they ? "

" Come up here, Sam," said Mr. Shelby, who had followed on to the verandah, " and tell your mistress what she wants. Come, come, Emily," said he, passing his arm round her, " you are cold and all of a shiver ; you allow yourself to feel too much."

" Here, Andy, you nigger, be alive ! " called Sam, under the verandah ; " take these yer hosses to der barn ; don't ye hear mas'r a-callin' ? " and Sam soon appeared, palm-leaf in hand, at the door.

" Now, Sam, tell us distinctly how the matter was," said Mr. Shelby. " Where is Eliza, if you know ? "

" Why, now," said Sam, " 'twas jist dis yer way. Mas'r Haley, and me, and Andy, we comes up to de little tavern by the river, and I rides a leetle ahead—I's so zealous to be a-cotchin' Lizy, that I couldn't hold in, no way—and

when I comes by the tavern winder, sure enough there she was, right in plain sight, and dey diggin' on behind. Wal, I loses off my hat, and sings out nuff to raise the dead. Course Lizy she hars, and she dodges back, when Mas'r Haley he goes past the door ; and then, I tell ye, she clared out de side door ; she went down the river bank. Mas'r Haley he seed her, and yelled out, and him, and me, and Andy, we took arter. Down she come to the river, and thar was the current running ten feet wide by the shore and over t'other side ice a-sawin' and a-jiggling up and down, kinder as 'twere a great island. We come right behind her, and I thought, my soul, he'd got her sure enough—when she gin such a screech as I never hearn, and thar she was, clar over t'other side of the current, on the ice, and then on she went, a-screechin' and a-jumpin'—the ice went crack ! c'wallop ! cracking ! chunk ! and she a-bounding like a buck. Lord, the spring that ar gal's got in her an't common, I'm o' 'pinion."

Mrs. Shelby sat perfectly silent, pale with excitement, while Sam told his story.

"God be praised, she isn't dead !" she said ; "but where is the poor child now ?"

"De Lord will pervide," said Sam, rolling up his eyes piously. "As I've been a-sayin', dis yer's a providence and no mistake, as missis has allers been a-instructin' on us. Thar's allers instruments ris up to do de Lord's will. Now, if 't hadn't been for me to-day, she'd a-been took a dozen times. Warn't it I started off de hosses, dis yer mornin', and kept 'em chasin' till nigh dinner-time ? And didn't I car Mas'r Haley nigh five miles out of de road, dis evening ? or else he'd a' come up with Lizy as easy as a dog arter a coon. These yer's all providences."

"They are a kind of providences that you'll have to be pretty sparing of, Master Sam. I allow no such practices with gentlemen on my place," said Mr. Shelby, with as much sternness as he could command under the circumstances.

Now, there is no more use in making believe to be angry with a negro than with a child ; both instinctively see the true state of the case, through all attempts to effect the contrary ; and Sam was in no way disheartened by this

rebuke, though he assumed an air of doleful gravity, and stood with the corners of his mouth lowered in most penitential style.

"Mas'r's quite right—quite; it was ugly on me—there's no disputin' that ar; and of course mas'r and missus wouldn't encourage no such works. I'm sensible of dat ar; but a poor nigger like me's amazin' tempted to act ugly sometimes, when fellers will cut up such shines as dat ar Mas'r Haley. He an't no gen'l'man no way; anybody's been raised as I've been can't help a-seein' dat ar."

"Well, Sam," said Mrs. Shelby, "as you appear to have a proper sense of your errors, you may now go and tell Aunt Chloe she may get you some of that cold ham that was left of dinner to-day. You and Andy must be hungry."

"Missis is a heap too good for us," said Sam, making his bow with alacrity, and departing.

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT A SENATOR IS BUT A MAN

THE light of the cheerful fire shone on the rug and carpet of a cosy parlour, and glittered on the sides of the tea-cups and well-brightened tea-pot, as Senator Bird was drawing off his boots, preparatory to inserting his feet in a pair of new handsome slippers, which his wife had been working for him while away on his senatorial tour. Mrs. Bird, looking the very picture of delight, was superintending the arrangements of the table.

"Well," she said, after the business of the tea-table was getting rather slack, "and what have they been doing in the Senate?"

"Not very much of importance."

"Well, but is it true that they have been passing a law forbidding people to give meat and drink to those poor coloured folks that come along? I heard they were talking of some such law, but I didn't think any Christian legislature would pass it!"

"Why, Mary, you are getting to be a politician all at once."

"No, nonsense! I wouldn't give a fip for all your politics generally; but I think this is something downright cruel and unchristian. I hope, my dear, no such law has been passed."

"There has been a law passed forbidding people to help off the slaves that come over from Kentucky, my dear; so much of that thing has been done by these reckless Abolitionists that our brethren in Kentucky are very strongly excited, and it seems necessary, and no more than Christian and kind, that something should be done by our State to quiet the excitement."

"And what is the law? It doesn't forbid us to shelter these poor creatures a night, does it? and to give 'em something comfortable to eat, and a few old clothes, and send them quietly about their business?"

"Why, yes, my dear; that would be aiding and abetting you know."

At this juncture, old Cudjoe, the black man-of-all-work, put his head in at the door, and wished "Missis would come into the kitchen"; and our senator, tolerably relieved, looked after his little wife with a whimsical mixture of amusement and vexation, and seating himself in the arm-chair, began to read the papers.

After a moment his wife's voice was heard at the door in a quick, earnest tone:

"John! John! I do wish you'd come here a moment."

He laid down his paper and went into the kitchen, and started, quite amazed at the sight that presented itself—a young and tender woman, with garments torn and frozen, with one shoe gone, and the stocking torn away from the cut and bleeding foot, was laid back in a deadly swoon upon two chairs. There was the impress of the despised race on her face, yet none could help feeling its mournful and pathetic beauty; while its stony sharpness, its cold, fixed, deathly aspect, struck a solemn chill over him. He drew his breath short and stood in silence. His wife and their only coloured domestic, old Aunt Dinah, were busily engaged in restorative measures, while old Cudjoe had got the boy on his knee, and was busy pulling off his shoes and stockings and chafing his little cold feet.

"Sure now, if she ain't a sight to behold!" said old

Dinah compassionately; "'pears like 'twas the heat that made her faint. She was tol'able peart when she cum in, and asked if she couldn't warm herself here a spell; and I was just a-askin' her where she cum from, and she fainted right down. Never done much hard work, guess, by the looks of her hands."

"Poor creature!" said Mrs. Bird compassionately, as the woman slowly unclosed her large dark eyes and looked vacantly at her. Suddenly an expression of agony crossed her face, and she sprang up, saying, "Oh, my Harry! Have they got him?"

The boy, at this, jumped from Cudjoe's knee, and running to her side, put up his arms.

"Oh, he's here! he's here!" she exclaimed. "O ma'am," she said wildly to Mrs. Bird, "do protect us! Don't let them get him!"

"Nobody shall hurt you here, poor woman," said Mrs. Bird encouragingly. "You are safe; don't be afraid."

"God bless you!" said the woman, covering her face and sobbing; while the little boy, seeing her crying, tried to get into her lap.

With many gentle and womanly offices, which none knew better how to render than Mrs. Bird, the poor woman was in time rendered more calm. A temporary bed was provided for her on the settle near the fire; and, after a short time, she fell into a heavy slumber, with the child, who seemed no less weary, soundly sleeping on her arm; for the mother resisted, with nervous anxiety, the kindest attempts to take him from her; and even in sleep her arm encircled him with an unrelaxing clasp, as if she could not even then be beguiled of her vigilant hold.

Mr. and Mrs. Bird had gone back to the parlour, where, strange as it may appear, no reference was made on either side to the preceding conversation; but Mrs. Bird busied herself with her knitting-work, and Mr. Bird pretended to be reading the paper.

Soon Dinah looked in to say that the woman was awake, and wanted to see missis.

Mr. and Mrs. Bird went into the kitchen, followed by the two eldest boys, the smaller fry having by this time been safely disposed of in bed.

The woman was now sitting up on the settle by the fire, She was looking steadily into the blaze, with a calm, heart-broken expression, very different from her former agitated wildness.

She lifted her dark eyes and fixed them on Mrs. Bird with such a forlorn and imploring expression that the tears came into the little woman's eyes.

"You needn't be afraid of anything; we are friends here, poor woman! Tell me where you came from, and what you want," said she.

"I came from Kentucky," said the woman.

"When?" said Mr. Bird, taking up the interrogatory.

"To-night."

"How did you come?"

"I crossed on the ice."

"Crossed on the ice?" said every one present.

"Yes," said the woman slowly, "I did. God helping me, I crossed the ice; for they were behind me—right behind—and there was no other way!"

"Lor, missis," said Cudjoe, "the ice is all in broken-up blocks, a-swinging and a-tettering up and down in the water!"

"I know it was—I know it!" said she wildly; "but I did it! I wouldn't have thought I could—I didn't think I should get over, but I didn't care! I could but die, if I didn't. The Lord helped me! Nobody knows how much the Lord can help 'em, till they try," said the woman with a flashing eye.

"Were you a slave?" said Mr. Bird.

"Yes, sir! I belonged to a man in Kentucky."

"Was he unkind to you?"

"No, sir; he was a good master."

"And was your mistress unkind to you?"

"No, sir—no! my mistress was always good to me.'

"What could induce to leave a good home, then, and run away, and go through such dangers?"

The woman looked up at Mrs. Bird with a keen, scrutinizing glance, and it did not escape her that she was dressed in deep mourning.

"Ma'am," she said suddenly, "have you ever lost a child?"

The question was unexpected, and it was a thrust on a new wound ; for it was only a month since a darling child of the family had been laid in the grave.

Mr. Bird turned round and walked to the window, and Mrs. Bird burst into tears ; but, recovering her voice she said :

" Why do you ask that ? I have lost a little one."

" Then you will feel for me. I have lost two, one after another—left 'em buried there when I came away ; and I had only this one left. I never slept a night without him ; he was all I had. He was my comfort and pride, day and night ; and, ma'am, they were going to take him away from me—to *sell* him—sell him down south, ma'am, to go all alone—a baby that had never been away from his mother in his life ! I couldn't stand it, ma'am. I knew I never should be good for anything if they did ; and when I knew the papers were signed, and he was sold, I took him and came off in the night ; and they chased me—the man that bought him and some of mas'r's folks—and they were coming down right behind me and I heard 'em. I jumped right on to the ice, and how I got across I don't know ; but, first I knew, a man was helping me up the bank."

The woman did not sob nor weep. She had gone to a place where tears are dry ; but every one around her was in some way, characteristic of themselves, showing signs of hearty sympathy. Our senator was a statesman, and of course could not be expected to cry, like other mortals ; and so he turned his back to the company, and looked out of the window, and seemed particularly busy in clearing his throat and wiping his spectacle-glasses, occasionally blowing his nose in a manner that was calculated to excite suspicion, had any one been in a state to observe critically.

" And where do you mean to go, my poor woman ? " said Mrs. Bird.

" To Canada, if I only knew where that was. Is it very far off, is Canada ? " said she, looking up, with a simple, confiding air, to Mrs. Bird's face.

" Poor thing ! " said Mrs. Bird involuntarily.

" Is't a very great way off, think ? " said the woman earnestly.

" Much farther than you think, poor child ! " said Mrs.

Bird; "but we will try to think what can be done for you. Here, Dinah, make her up a bed in your own room, close by the kitchen, and I'll think what to do for her in the morning. Meanwhile, never fear, poor woman. Put your trust in God; He will protect you!"

Mrs. Bird and her husband re-entered the parlour. She sat still in her little rocking-chair before the fire, swaying thoughtfully to and fro. Mr. Bird strode up and down the room, grumbling to himself. "Pish! Pshaw! confounded awkward business!" At length, striding up to his wife, he said:

"I say, wife, she'll have to get away from here, this very night. That fellow will be down on the scent bright and early to-morrow morning. If 'twas only the woman, she could lay quiet till it was over; but that little chap can't be kept still by a troop of horse and foot, I'll warrant me; he'll bring it all out, popping his head out of some window or door. A pretty kettle of fish it would be for me, too, to be caught with them both here, just now. No; they'll have to be got off to-night."

"To-night! How is it possible?—where to?"

"Well, I know pretty well where to," said the senator, beginning to put on his boots, with a reflective air; and stopping when his leg was half in, he embraced his knee with both hands, and seemed to go off in deep meditation.

"It's a confounded awkward, ugly business," said he at last, beginning to tug at his boot-straps again, "and that's a fact!" After one boot was fairly on, the senator sat with the other in his hand, profoundly studying the figure on the carpet. "It will have to be done, though, for aught I see—hang it all!" and he drew the other boot anxiously on, and looked out of the window.

"You see," he continued, "there's my old client, Van Trompe, has come over from Kentucky, and set all his slaves free; and he has bought a place seven miles up the creek, here, back in the woods, where nobody goes, unless they go on purpose; and it's a place that isn't found in a hurry. There she'd be safe enough; but the plague of the thing is, nobody could drive a carriage there to-night but *me*."

"Why not! Cudjoe is an excellent driver."

"Ay, ay; but here it is. The creek has to be crossed twice; and the second crossing is quite dangerous, unless one knows it as I do. I have crossed it a hundred times on horseback, and know exactly the turns to take. And so, you see, there's no help for it. Cudjoe must put in the horses, as quietly as may be, about twelve o'clock, and I'll take her over; and then, to give colour to the matter, he must carry me on to the next tavern, to take the stage for Columbus that comes by about three or four, and so it will look as if I had had the carriage only for that. I shall get into business bright and early in the morning. But I'm thinking I shall feel rather cheap there, after all that's been said and done; but, hang it, I can't help it!"

"Your heart is better than your head, in this case, John," said the wife, laying her little white hand on his. "Could I ever have loved you, had I not known you better than you know yourself?" And the little woman looked so handsome, with the tears sparkling in her eyes, that the senator thought he must be a decidedly clever fellow to get such a pretty creature into such a passionate admiration of him; and so what could he do but walk off soberly to see about the carriage? At the door, however, he stopped a moment, and then coming back, he said, with some hesitation:

"Mary, I don't know how you'd feel about it, but there's the drawer full of things—of—of—poor little Henry's." So saying, he turned quickly on his heel, and shut the door after him.

His wife opened the little bedroom door adjoining her room, and, taking the candle, set it down at the top of a bureau there; and then from a small recess she took a key, and put it thoughtfully in the lock of a drawer, and made a sudden pause; while two boys, who, boy-like, had followed close on her heels, stood looking, with silent, significant glances, at their mother.

Mrs. Bird slowly opened the drawer. She sat down by the drawer, and, leaning her head on her hands over it, wept till the tears fell through her fingers into the drawer; then suddenly raising her head, she began, with nervous haste, selecting the plainest and most substantial articles, and gathering them into a bundle.

After a while, Mrs. Bird opened a wardrobe, and taking from thence a plain serviceable dress or two, she sat down busily to her work-table, and, with needle, scissors, and thimble at hand, quietly commenced a letting down process, and continued busily at it till the old clock in the corner struck twelve, and she heard the low rattling of wheels at the door.

"Mary," said her husband, coming in, with his overcoat in his hand, "you must wake her up now; we must be off."

Mrs. Bird hastily deposited the various articles she had collected in a small plain trunk, and locking it, desired her husband to see it in the carriage, and then proceeded to call the woman. Soon, arrayed in a cloak, bonnet, and shawl, that had belonged to her benefactress, she appeared at the door, with the child in her arms. Mr. Bird hurried her into the carriage, and Mrs. Bird pressed on after her to the carriage-steps. Eliza leaned out of the carriage, and put out her hand, a hand as soft and beautiful as was given in return. She fixed her large, dark eyes, full of earnest meaning, on Mrs. Bird's face, and seemed going to speak. Her lips moved, she tried once or twice, but there was no sound, and pointing upward, with a look never to be forgotten, she fell back in the seat, and covered her face. The door was shut, and the carriage drove on.

Be that as it may, if our good senator was a political sinner, he was in a fair way to expiate it by his night's penance. There had been a long continuous period of rainy weather, and the soft, rich earth of Ohio, as every one knows, is admirably suited to the manufacture of mud; and the road was an Ohio railroad of the good old times.

But we forbear to describe that drive out of sympathy to our readers' bones. Western travellers, who have beguiled the midnight hour in the interesting process of pulling down rail-fences to pry their carriages out of mud-holes, will have a respectful and mournful sympathy with our unfortunate hero. We beg them to drop a silent tear, and pass on.

It was full late in the night when the carriage emerged, dripping and bespattered, out of the creek, and stood at the door of a large farmhouse. It took no inconsiderable

perseverance to arouse the inmates; but at last the respectable proprietor appeared, and undid the door.

Honest old John van Trompe was once quite a considerable land-holder and slave-owner in the State of Kentucky. Having "nothing of the bear about him but the skin," and being gifted by nature with a great, honest, just heart, quite equal to his gigantic frame, he had been for some years witnessing with repressed uneasiness the workings of a system equally bad for oppressor and oppressed. At last, one day, John's great heart had swelled altogether too big to wear his bonds any longer; so he just took his pocket-book out of his desk, and went over into Ohio, and bought a quarter of a township of good, rich land, made out free papers for all his people, men, women, and children, packed them up in wagons, and sent them off to settle down; and then honest John turned his face up the creek, and sat quietly down on a snug, retired farm, to enjoy his conscience and his reflections.

"Are you the man that will shelter a poor woman and child from slave-catchers?" said the senator explicitly.

"I rather think I am," said honest John, with some considerable emphasis.

"I thought so," said the senator.

"If there's anybody comes," said the good man, stretching his tall, muscular form upward, "why, here I'm ready for him; and I've got seven sons, each six foot high, and they'll be ready for 'em. Give our respects to 'em," said John; "tell 'em it's no matter how soon they call, make no kinder difference to us," said John, running his fingers through the shock of hair that thatched his head, and bursting out into a great laugh.

Weary, jaded, and spiritless, Eliza dragged herself up to the door, with her child lying, in a heavy sleep, on her arm. The rough man held the candle to her face, and, uttering a kind of compassionate grunt, opened the door of a small bedroom adjoining to the large kitchen where they were standing, and motioned her to go in. He took down a candle, and lighting it, set it upon the table, and then addressed himself to Eliza.

"Now, I say, gal, you needn't be a bit afeared, let who will come here. I'm up to all that sort o' thing," said he,

pointing to two or three goodly rifles over the mantelpiece; "and most people that know me know that 'twouldn't be healthy to try to get anybody out o' my house when I'm agin it. So *now* you jist go to sleep now, as quiet as if yer mother was a-rockin' ye," said he, as he shut the door.

"Why, this is an uncommon handsome un," he said to the senator. "Ah, well; handsome uns has the greatest cause to run sometimes, if they has any kind o' feeling, such as decent women should. I know all about that."

The senator, in a few words, briefly explained Eliza's history.

"Ye'd better yerself jest put up here, now, till daylight," said Van Trompe heartily; "and I'll call up the old woman, and have a bed got ready for you in no time."

"Thank you, my good friend," said the senator, "I must be along, to take the night stage for Columbus."

"Ah, well, then, if you must, I'll go a piece with you, and show you a cross road that will take you there better than the road you came on. That road's mighty bad."

John equipped himself, and, with lantern in hand, was soon seen guiding the senator's carriage towards the road that ran down in a hollow, at the back of his dwelling. When they parted, the senator put into his hand a ten-dollar bill.

"It's for her," he said briefly.

"Ay, ay!" said John, with equal conciseness.

They shook hands, and parted.

CHAPTER X

THE PROPERTY IS CARRIED OFF

THE February morning looked grey and drizzling through the window of Uncle Tom's cabin. It looked on downcast faces, the images of mournful hearts. The little table stood out before the fire, covered with an ironing cloth; a coarse but clean shirt or two, fresh from the iron, hung on the back of a chair by the fire, and Aunt Chloe had another spread out before her on the table. Carefully she rubbed

and ironed every fold and every hem, with the most scrupulous exactness, every now and then raising her hand to her face to wipe off the tears that were coursing down her cheeks.

Tom sat by, with his Testament open on his knee, and his head leaning upon his hand ; but neither spoke. It was yet early, and the children lay all asleep together in their little rude trundle-bed.

Tom, who had to the full the gentle, domestic heart, which, woe for them ! has been a peculiar characteristic of his unhappy race, got up and walked silently to look at his children.

" It's the last time," he said.

Aunt Chloe did not answer, only rubbed away over and over on the coarse shirt, already as smooth as hands could make it ; and setting her iron suddenly down with a despairing plunge, she sat down to the table, and " lifted up her voice and wept."

" S'pose we must be resigned ; but, O Lord ! how ken I ? If I know'd anything whar you's goin', or how they sarve you ! Missis says she'll try and deem ye, in a year or two ; but Lor ! nobody never comes up that goes down thar ! They kills 'em ! I've hearn 'em tell how dey works 'em up on dem ar plantations."

" There'll be the same God there, Chloe, that there is here."

" Well," said Aunt Chloe, " s'pose dere will ; but de Lord lets dreffal things happen, sometimes. I don't seem to get no comfort dat way."

" I'm in the Lord's hands," said Tom ; " nothin' can go no furder than He lets it ; and thar's *one* thing I can thank Him for. It's *me* that's sold and going down, and not you nur the chil'en. Here you're safe ; what comes will come only on me ; and the Lord, He'll help me—I know He will."

Ah, brave, manly heart, smothering thine own sorrow to comfort thy beloved ones ! Tom spoke with a thick utterance, and with a bitter choking in his throat—but he spoke brave and strong.

" Let's think on our marcies ! " he added tremulously, as if he was quite sure he needed to think on them very hard indeed.

" Marcies ! " said Aunt Chloe, " don't see no marcy

in't! 'Tan't right! 'tan't right it should be so! Mas'r never ought ter left it so that ye *could* be took for his debts. Ye've arn't him all he gets for ye, twice over. He owed ye yer freedom, and ought ter gin't to yer years ago. Mebbe he can't help himself now, but I feel it's wrong. Nothing can't beat that ar out o' me. Such a faithful critter as ye've been, and allers sot his business 'for yer own every way, and reckoned on him more than yer own wife and chil'en! Them as sells heart's love and heart's blood, to get out thar scrapes, de Lord'll be up to 'em!"

"Chloe! now, if ye love me, yer won't talk so, when, perhaps jest the last time we'll ever have together! And I'll tell ye, Chloe, it goes agin me to hear one word agin mas'r. Wan't he put in my arms a baby? It's natur' I should think a heap of him. And he couldn't be spected to think so much of poor Tom. Mas'rs are used to havin' all these yer things done for 'em, and nat'lly they don't think so much on't. They can't be spected to, no way. Set him 'longside of other mas'rs, who's had the treatment and the livin' I've had? And he never would have let this yer come on me if he could have seed it aforehand. I know he wouldn't."

"Wal, any way, thar's wrong about it *somewhar*," said Aunt Chloe, in whom a stubborn sense of justice was a predominant trait. "I can't jest make out whar 'tis, but thar's wrong somewhar, I'm *clar* o' that."

"Yer ought ter look up to the Lord above; He's above all—thar don't a sparrow fall without Him."

"It don't seem to comfort me, but I spect it orter," said Aunt Chloe. "But dar's no use talkin': I'll jest wet up de corn-cake, and get ye one good breakfast, 'cause nobody knows when you'll get another."

The simple morning meal now smoked on the table, for Mrs. Shelby had excused Aunt Chloe's attendance at the great house that morning. The poor soul had expended all her little energies on this farewell feast—had killed and dressed her choicest chicken, and prepared her corn-cake with scrupulous exactness, just to her husband's taste, and brought out certain mysterious jars on the mantelpiece, some preserves that were never produced except on extreme occasions.

"Lor, Pete," said Mose triumphantly, "han't we got a buster of a breakfast!" at the same time catching at a fragment of the chicken.

Aunt Chloe gave him a sudden box on the ear. "Thar, now! crowing over the last breakfast yer poor daddy's gwine to have to home!"

"O Chloe!" said Tom gently.

"Wal, I can't help it," said Aunt Chloe, hiding her face in her apron; "I's so tossed about, it makes me act ugly."

The boys stood quite still, looking first at their father and then at their mother, while the baby, climbing up her clothes began an imperious, commanding cry.

"Thar!" said Aunt Chloe, wiping her eyes and taking up the baby; "now I'se done, I hope—now to eat something. This yer's my nicest chicken. Thar, boys, ye shall have some, poor critters! Yer mammy's been cross to yer."

The boys needed no second invitation, and went in with great zeal for the eatables; and it was well they did so, as otherwise there would have been very little performed to any purpose by the party.

"And," said Aunt Chloe, bustling about after breakfast, "I must put up yer clothes. Jest like as not, he'll take 'em all away. I know thar ways—mean as dirt, they is! Wal, now, yer flannels for rhumatis is in this corner; so be careful, 'cause there won't nobody make ye no more. Then here's yer old shirts, and these yer is new ones. I toed off these yer stockings last night, and put de ball in 'em to mend with. But Lor! who'll ever mend for ye?" and Aunt Chloe, again overcome, laid her head on the box side, and sobbed. "To think on't! no critter to do for ye, sick or well! I don't railly think I ought ter be good now!"

The boys having eaten everything there was on the breakfast table began now to take some thought of the case; and seeing their mother crying, and their father looking very sad, began to whimper and put their hands to their eyes. Uncle Tom had the baby on his knee, and was letting her enjoy herself to the utmost extent, scratching his face and pulling his hair, and occasionally breaking out into clamorous explosions of delight, evidently arising out of her own internal reflections.

Mrs. Shelby entered. Aunt Chloe set a chair for her in a manner decidedly gruff and crusty. She did not seem to notice either the action or the manner. She looked pale and anxious.

"Tom," she said, "I come to——" and stopping suddenly, and regarding the silent group, she sat down in the chair, and, covering her face with her handkerchief, began to sob.

"Lor, now, missis, don't—don't!" said Aunt Chloe, bursting out in her turn; and for a few moments they all wept in company. And in those tears they all shed together, the high and the lowly, melted away all the heart-burnings and anger of the oppressed.

"My good fellow," said Mrs. Shelby, "I can't give you anything to do you any good. If I give you money, it will only be taken from you. But I tell you solemnly, and before God, that I will keep trace of you, and bring you back as soon as I can command the money; and, till then, trust in God!"

Here the boys called out that Mas'r Haley was coming, and then an unceremonious kick pushed open the door. Haley stood there in very ill-humour, having ridden hard the night before, and being not at all pacified by his ill-success in recapturing his prey.

"Come," he said, "ye nigger, ye'r ready? Servant, ma'am!" said he, taking off his hat, as he saw Mrs. Shelby.

Aunt Chloe shut and corded the box, and getting up, looked gruffly on the trader, her tears seeming suddenly turned to sparks of fire.

Tom rose up meekly to follow his new master, and raised up his heavy box on his shoulder. His wife took the baby in her arms to go with him to the wagon, and the children, still crying, trailed on behind.

Mrs. Shelby, walking up to the trader, detained him for a few moments, talking with him in an earnest manner; and while she was thus talking, the whole family party proceeded to a wagon that stood ready harnessed at the door. A crowd of all the old and young hands on the place stood gathered around it, to bid farewell to their old associate. Tom had been looked up to, both as a head servant and a Christian teacher, by all the place, and there was much

honest sympathy and grief about him, particularly among the women.

"Why, Chloe, you bar it better'n we do!" said one of the women, who had been weeping freely, noticing the gloomy calmness with which Aunt Chloe stood by the wagon.

"I's done *my* tears!" said she, looking grimly at the trader, who was coming up. "I doesn't feel to cry 'fore dat ar old limb, no how!"

"Get in!" said Haley to Tom, as he strode through the crowd of servants, who looked at him with lowering brows.

Tom got in, and Haley, drawing out from under the wagon-seat a heavy pair of shackles, made them fast round each ankle.

A smothered groan of indignation ran through the whole circle, and Mrs. Shelby spoke from the verandah:

"Mr. Haley, I assure you that precaution is entirely unnecessary."

"Do'n know, ma'am. I've lost one five hundred dollars from this yer place, and I can't afford to run no more risks."

"What else could she spect on him?" said Aunt Chloe indignantly; while the two boys, who seemed to comprehend at once their father's destiny, clung to her gown, sobbing and groaning vehemently.

"I'm sorry," said Tom, "that Mas'r George happened to be away."

George had gone to spend two or three days with a companion on a neighbouring estate, and, having departed early in the morning before Tom's misfortune had been made public, had left without hearing of it.

"Give my love to Mas'r George," he said earnestly.

Haley whipped up the horse, and, with a steady, mournful look fixed to the last on the old place, Tom was whirled away.

Mr. Shelby at this time was not at home. He had gone on a short business tour up the country, hoping that all would be over before he returned.

Tom and Haley rattled on along the dusty road, whirling past every old familiar spot, until the bounds of the estate were fairly passed, and they found themselves out on the open pike. After they had ridden about a mile, Haley

suddenly drew up at the door of a blacksmith's shop, when, taking out with him a pair of handcuffs, he stepped into the shop, to have a little alteration in them.

"These yer's a little too small for his build," said Haley, showing the fetters, and pointing out to Tom.

"Lor! now, if thar an't Shelby's Tom. He han't sold him, now?" said the smith.

"Yes, he has," said Haley.

"Now, ye don't! Well, reely," said the smith, "who'd a thought it! Why, ye needn't go to fetterin' him up this yer way. He's the faithfullest best critter——"

"Yes, yes," said Haley; "but your good fellows are just the critters to want ter run off. Them stupid ones, as doesn't care whar they go, and shiftless, drunken ones, as don't care for nothin', they'll stick by, and like as not be rather pleased to be toted round; but these yer prime fellows, they hates it like sin. No way but to fetter 'em; got legs—they'll use 'em, no mistake."

"Now, I tell ye what, Tom," said Haley, as he came up to the wagon, and threw in the handcuffs: "I mean to start fa'r with ye, as I gen'ally do with my niggers; and I'll tell ye now, to begin with, you treat me fa'r, an I'll treat you fa'r; I an't never hard on my niggers. Calculates to do the best for 'em I can. Now, ye see, you'd better jest settle down comfortable, and not be tryin' no tricks; because niggers' tricks of all sorts I'm up to, and it's no use. If niggers is quiet, and don't try to get off, they has good times with me; and if they don't, why, it's thar fault, and not mine."

CHAPTER XI

SELECT INCIDENT OF LAWFUL TRADE

Mr. Haley and Tom jogged onward in their wagon, each for a time absorbed in his own reflections.

After a time, Mr. Haley pulled out of his pocket sundry newspapers, and began looking over their advertisements with absorbed interest. He was not a remarkably fluent reader, and was in the habit of reading in a sort of recitative,

half-aloud, by way of calling in his ears to verify the deductions of his eyes. In this tone he slowly recited the following paragraph :

"EXECUTORS' SALE.—NEGROES.—Agreeably to order of court, will be sold, on Tuesday, February 20, before the Court-house door, in the town of Washington, Kentucky, the following negroes:—Hagar, aged 60; John, aged 30; Ben, aged 21; Saul, aged 25; Albert, aged 14. Sold for the benefit of the creditors and heirs of the estate of Jesse Blutchford, Esq.

"SAMUEL MORRIS,
"THOMAS FLINT, } *Executors.*"

"This yer I must look at," said he to Tom, for want of somebody else to talk to. "Ye see, I am going to get up a prime gang to take down with ye, Tom; it'll make it sociable and pleasant like—good company will, ye know. We must drive right to Washington first and foremost, and then I'll clap you into jail while I does the business."

Tom received this agreeable intelligence quite meekly; simply wondering in his own heart, how many of these doomed men had wives and children, and whether they would feel as he did about leaving them. It is to be confessed, too, that the naïve, off-hand information that he was to be thrown into jail by no means produced an agreeable impression on a poor fellow who had always prided himself on a strictly honest and upright course of life.

However, the day wore on, and the evening saw Haley and Tom comfortably accommodated in Washington—the one in a tavern, the other in a jail.

About eleven o'clock the next day, a mixed throng was gathered around the court-house steps—smoking, chewing, spitting, swearing, and conversing, according to their respective tastes and turns, waiting for the auction to commence. The men and women to be sold sat in a group apart, talking in a low tone to each other.

The stentorian tones of the auctioneer, calling out to clear the way, now announced that the sale was about to commence. A place was cleared, and the bidding began. The different men on the list were soon knocked off at prices which showed a pretty brisk demand in the market: two men and the boy fell to Haley.

"Now!" said Haley, pushing his three purchases together, and producing a bundle of handcuffs, which he proceeded to put on their wrists; and fastening each handcuff to a long chain, he drove them before him to the jail.

A few days saw Haley, with his possessions, safely deposited on one of the Ohio boats. It was the commencement of his gang, to be augmented, as the boat moved on, by various other merchandise of the same kind, which he, or his agent, had stored for him in various points along shore.

The *La Belle Rivière*, as brave and beautiful a boat as ever walked the waters of her namesake river, was floating gaily down the stream, under a brilliant sky, the stripes and stars of free America waving and fluttering overhead; the guards crowded with well-dressed ladies and gentlemen walking and enjoying the delightful day. All was full of life, buoyant and rejoicing; all but Haley's gang, who were stored, with other freight, on the lower deck, and who, somehow, did not seem to appreciate their various privileges, as they sat in a knot, talking to each other in low tones.

"Boys," said Haley, coming up briskly, "I hope you keep up good heart and are cheerful. Now, no sulks, ye see; keep stiff upper lip, boys; do well by me, and I'll do well by you."

The boys addressed responded the invariable "Yes, mas'r," for ages the watchword of poor Africa; but it is to be owned they did not look particularly cheerful. They had their various little prejudices in favour of wives, mothers, sisters, and children, seen for the last time; and though "they that wasted them required of them mirth," it was not instantly forthcoming.

"I've got a wife," spoke out the article enumerated as "John, aged thirty," and he laid his chained hand on Tom's knee, "and she don't know a word about this, poor girl!"

"Where does she live?" asked Tom.

"In a tavern a piece down here," said John. "I wish, now I *could* see her once more in this world," he added.

Poor John! It *was* rather natural; and the tears that fell, as he spoke, came as naturally as if he had been a white man. Tom drew a long breath from a sore heart, and tried, in his poor way, to comfort him.

And overhead, in the cabin, sat fathers and mothers, husbands and wives; and merry, dancing children moved round among them, like so many little butterflies, and everyone was quite easy and comfortable.

CHAPTER XII

THE QUAKER SETTLEMENT

A QUIET scene now rises before us. A large, roomy, neatly-painted kitchen, its yellow floor glossy and smooth, and without a particle of dust; a neat, well-blacked cooking-stove; rows of shining tin, suggestive of unmentionable good things to the appetite; glossy green wood chairs, old and firm; a small flag-bottomed rocking-chair with a patchwork cushion on it, neatly contrived out of small pieces of different coloured woollen goods, and a larger-sized one, motherly and old; and in the chair, gently swaying back and forward, her eyes bent on some fine sewing, sat our old friend Eliza.

By her side sat Rachel Halliday with a bright tin pan in her lap, into which she was carefully sorting some dried peaches. She might be fifty-five or sixty; but hers was one of those faces that time seems to touch only to brighten and adorn. The snowy lisse crape cap, made after the straight Quaker pattern, the plain white muslin handkerchief, lying in placid folds across her bosom, the drab shawl and dress, showed at once the community to which she belonged. Her face was round and rosy, with a healthful downy softness, suggestive of a ripe peach.

"And so thee still thinks of going to Canada, Eliza?" she said, as she was quietly looking over the peaches.

"Yes, ma'am," said Eliza firmly. "I must go onward. I dare not stop."

"Thee knows thee can stay here as long as thee pleases," said Rachel.

"Oh, thank you," said Eliza, "but"—she pointed to Harry—"I can't sleep nights; I can't rest. Last night I dreamed I saw that man coming into the yard," she said, shuddering.

"Poor child!" said Rachel, wiping her eyes; "but thee mustn't feel so. The Lord hath ordered it so that never hath a fugitive been stolen from our village. I trust thine will not be the first."

Simeon Halliday, a tall, straight, muscular man, in drabcoat and pantaloons, and a broad-brimmed hat, now entered.

"Any news father?" said Rachel.

"Peter Stebbins told me that they should be along to-night, with *friends*," said Simeon significantly, as he was washing his hands at a neat sink, in a little back porch.

"Indeed!" said Rachel, looking thoughtfully, and glancing at Eliza.

"Did thee say thy name was Harris?" said Simeon to Eliza as he re-entered.

Rachel glanced quickly at her husband, as Eliza tremulously answered "Yes"; her fears, ever uppermost, suggested that possibly there might be advertisements out for her.

"Mother!" said Simeon, standing in the porch, and calling Rachel out.

"What does thee want, father?" said Rachel.

"This child's husband is in the settlement, and will be here to-night," said Simeon.

"Now, thee doesn't say that, father?" said Rachel, all her face radiant with joy.

"It's really true. Peter was down yesterday, with the wagon, to the other stand; and there he found an old woman and two men, and one said his name was George Harris; and from what he told of his history, I am certain who he is. He's a bright, likely fellow, too."

The next morning was a cheerful one at the Quaker's house. "Mother" was up betimes, and surrounded by busy girls and boys, whom we had scarce time to introduce to our readers yesterday, and who all moved obediently to Rachel's gentle "Thee had better," or more gentle "Hadn't thee better?" in the work of getting breakfast.

While all other preparations were going on, Simeon the elder stood in his shirt-sleeves before a little looking-glass

in the corner, engaged in the anti-patriarchal occupation of shaving. When George and Eliza and little Harry came out, they met with such a hearty, rejoicing welcome, no wonder it seemed to them like a dream.

At last, they were all seated at breakfast, while Mary stood at the stove, baking griddle-cakes, which, as they gained the true exact golden-brown tint of perfection, were transferred quite handily to the table.

It was the first time that ever George had sat down on equal terms at any white man's table; and he sat down, at first, with some constraint and awkwardness; but they all exhaled and went off like fog in the genial morning rays of this simple, overflowing kindness.

This, indeed, was a home—*home*—a word that George had never yet known a meaning for; and a belief in God, and trust in His providence, began to encircle his heart as with a golden cloud of protection and confidence—dark, misanthropic, pining, atheistic doubts, and fierce despair, melted away before the light of a living Gospel, breathed in living faces, preached by a thousand unconscious acts of love and good-will, which, like the cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, shall never lose their reward.

"Father, what if thee should get found out again?" said Simeon Second, as he buttered his cake.

"I should pay my fine," said Simeon quietly.

"But what if they put thee in prison?"

"Couldn't thee and mother manage the farm?" said Simeon smiling.

"I hope, my good sir, that you are not exposed to any difficulty on our account," said George anxiously.

"Fear nothing, George, for therefore are we sent into the world. If we would not meet trouble for a good cause, we were not worthy of our name."

"But, for *me*," said George, "I could not bear it."

"Fear not then, friend George; it is not for thee, but for God and man, we do it," said Simeon. "And now thou must lie by quietly this day; and to-night, at ten o'clock, Phineas Fletcher will carry thee onward to the next stand—thee and the rest of thy company. The pursuers are hard after thee; we must not delay."

"If that is the case, why wait till evening?" said George.

"Thou art safe here by daylight, for every one in the settlement is a Friend, and all are watching. Moreover, it is safer to travel by night."

CHAPTER XIII

EVANGELINE

THE slanting light of the setting sun quivers on the sea-like expanse of the Mississippi; the shivery canes, and the tall, dark cypress, hung with wreaths of dark, funeral moss, glow in the golden ray, as the heavily-laden steamboat marches onward.

Piled with cotton-bales, from many a plantation, up over deck and sides, till she seems in the distance a square, massive block of grey, she moves heavily onward to the nearing mart. We must look some time among its crowded decks before we shall find again our humble friend Tom. High on the upper deck, in a little nook among the everywhere predominant cotton-bales, at last we may find him.

Partly from the confidence inspired by Mr. Shelby's representations, and partly from the remarkably inoffensive and quiet character of the man, Tom had insensibly won his way far into the confidence even of such a man as Haley. For some time Tom had enjoyed a sort of parole of honour, being permitted to come and go freely where he pleased on the boat.

Ever quiet and obliging, and more than ready to lend a hand in every emergency which occurred among the workmen below, he had won the good opinion of all the hands, and spent many hours in helping them with as hearty a goodwill as ever he worked on a Kentucky farm.

When there seemed to be nothing for him to do, he would climb to a nook among the cotton-bales of the upper deck, and busy himself in studying over his Bible—and it is there we see him now.

Among the passengers on the boat was a young gentleman of fortune and family, resident in New Orleans, who bore the name of St. Clare. He had with him a daughter, between five and six years of age, together with a lady who

seemed to claim relationship to both, and to have the little one especially under her charge.

Tom had often caught glimpses of this little girl—for she was one of those busy, tripping creatures, that can be no more contained in one place than a sunbeam or a summer breeze; nor was she one that once seen could be easily forgotten. Her face was remarkable less for its perfect beauty of feature than for a singular and dreamy earnestness of expression, which made the ideal start when they looked at her and by which the dullest and most literal were impressed without exactly knowing why. Always dressed in white, she seemed to move like a shadow through all sorts of places, without contracting spot or stain; and there was not a corner or nook above or below, where these fairy footsteps had not glided, and that visionary golden head, with its deep blue eyes, fleeted along.

Tom watched the little lady a great deal before he ventured on any overtures towards acquaintanceship. He knew an abundance of simple acts to propitiate and invite the approaches of the little people, and he resolved to play his part right skilfully. He could cut cunning little baskets out of cherry-stones, could make grotesque faces on hickory nuts, or odd-jumping figures out of elder-pith, and he was a very Pan in the manufacture of whistles of all sizes and sorts.

The little one was shy, for all her busy interest in everything going on, and it was not easy to tame her. For a while, she would perch like a canary-bird on some box or packages near Tom, while busy in the little arts aforesaid, and take from him, with a kind of grave graciousness, the little articles he offered. But at last they got on quite confidential terms.

"What's little missy's name?" said Tom at last, when he thought matters were ripe to push an inquiry.

"Evangeline St. Clare," said the little one, "though papa and everybody else call me Eva. Now, what's your name?"

"My name's Tom; the little chil'en used to call me Uncle Tom, way back thar in Kentuck.

"Then I mean to call you Uncle Tom, because, you see, I like you," said Eva. "So, Uncle Tom, where are you going?"

"I don't know," Miss Eva.

"Don't know?" said Eva.

"No. I am going to be sold to somebody. I don't know who."

"My papa can buy you," said Eva quickly; "and if he buys you, you will have good times. I mean to ask him to this very day."

"Thank you, my little lady," said Tom.

The boat here stopped at a small landing to take in wood, and Eva, hearing her father's voice, bounded nimbly away. Tom rose up, and went forward to offer his service in wooding, and soon was busy among the hands.

Eva and her father were standing together by the railings to see the boat start from the landing place; the wheel had made two or three revolutions in the water, when, by some sudden movement, the little one suddenly lost her balance, and fell sheer over the side of the boat into the water. Her father, scarce knowing what he did, was plunging in after her, but was held back by some behind him, who saw that more efficient aid had followed his child.

Tom was standing just under her on the lower deck as she fell. He saw her strike the water and sink, and was after her in a moment. A broad-chested, strong-armed fellow, it was nothing for him to keep afloat in the water till, in a moment or two, the child rose to the surface, and he caught her in his arms and swimming with her to the boat-side, handed her up, all dripping, to the grasp of hundreds of hands, which, as if they had all belonged to one man, were stretched eagerly out to receive her. A few moments more, and her father bore her, dripping and senseless, to the ladies' cabin, where, as is usual in cases of the kind, there ensued a very well-meaning and kind-hearted strife among the female occupants generally, as to who should do the most things to make a disturbance, and to hinder her recovery in every way possible.

It was a sultry, close day, the next day, as the steamer drew near to New Orleans. On the lower deck sat our friend Tom, with his arms folded, and anxiously, from time to time, turning his eyes towards a group on the other side of the boat.

There stood the fair Evangeline, a little paler than the day before, but otherwise, exhibiting no traces of the accident which had befallen her. A graceful, elegantly-formed young man stood by her, carelessly leaning one elbow on a bale of cotton, while a large pocket-book lay open before him. It was quite evident, at a glance, that the gentleman was Eva's father. He was listening with a good-humoured, negligent air, half comic, half contemptuous, to Haley, who was very volubly expatiating on the quality of the article for which they were bargaining.

"All the moral and Christian virtues bound in black morocco, complete!" he said, when Haley had finished. "Well, now, my good fellow, what's the damage, as they say in Kentucky; in short, what's to be paid out for this business? How much are you going to cheat me, now? Out with it."

"Wal," said Haley, "if I should say thirteen hundred dollars for that ar fellow, I shouldn't but just save myself —I shouldn't, now, raily."

"Poor fellow!" said the young man, fixing his keen, mocking blue eyes on him; "but I suppose you would let me have him for that, out of a particular regard for me?"

If the trader had not been sure, by a certain good-humoured twinkle in the large blue eyes that this banter was sure in the long run to turn out a cash concern, he might have been somewhat out of patience; as it was, he laid down a greasy pocket-book on the cotton-bales, and began anxiously studying over certain papers in it, the young man standing by the while, looking down on him with an air of careless, easy drollery.

"Papa, do buy him? It's no matter what you pay," whispered Eva softly, getting up on a package, and putting her arm around her father's neck. "You have money enough, I know. I want him."

"What for, pussy? Are you going to use him for a rattle-box, or a rocking-horse, or what?"

"I want to make him happy."

"An original reason, certainly."

Here the trader handed up a certificate, signed by Mr.

Shelby, which the young man took with the tips of his long fingers and glanced over carelessly.

"A gentlemanly hand," he said, "and well spelt, too. There, count your money, old boy!" he added, as he handed the roll to the trader.

"All right," said Haley, his face beaming with delight; and, pulling out an old inkhorn, he proceeded to fill out a bill of sale, which, in a few moments, he handed to the young man.

"Come Eva," the young man said; and taking the hand of his daughter, he stepped across the boat, and, carelessly, putting the tip of his finger under Tom's chin, said good-humouredly, "Look up, Tom, and see how you like your new master."

Tom looked up. It was not in nature to look into that gay, young, handsome face, without a feeling of pleasure; and Tom felt the tears start in his eyes as he said, heartily, "God bless you, mas'r!"

"Well, I hope He will. What's your name? Tom? Quite as likely to do it for your asking as mine, from all accounts. Can you drive horses, Tom?"

"I've been allays used to horses," said Tom. "Mas'r Shelby raised heaps on 'em."

"Well, I think I shall put you in coachy, on condition that you won't be drunk more than once a week, unless in cases of emergency, Tom."

Tom looked surprised and rather hurt, and said, "I never drink, mas'r."

"I've heard that story before, Tom; but then we'll see. It will be a special accommodation to all concerned if you don't. Never mind, my boy," he added good-humouredly, seeing Tom still looked grave; "I don't doubt you mean to do well."

"I sartin do, mas'r," said Tom.

"And you shall have good times," said Eva. "Papa is very good to everybody, only he always will laugh at them."

"Papa is much obliged to you for his recommendation," said St. Clare, laughing as he turned on his heel and walked away.

CHAPTER XIV

OF TOM'S NEW MASTER, AND VARIOUS OTHER MATTERS

SINCE the thread of our humble hero's life has now become interwoven with that of higher ones, it is necessary to give some brief introduction to them.

Augustine St. Clare was the son of a wealthy planter of Louisiana. The family had its origin in Canada. Of two brothers very similar in temperament and character, one had settled on a flourishing farm in Vermont, and the other became an opulent planter in Louisiana. The mother of Augustine was a Huguenot French lady, whose family had emigrated to Louisiana during the days of its early settlement. Augustine and another brother were the only children of their parents. Having inherited from his mother an exceeding delicacy of constitution, he was, at the instance of physicians, during many years of his boyhood sent to the care of his uncle in Vermont, in order that his constitution might be strengthened by the cold of a more bracing climate.

Soon after the completion of his college course, his whole nature was kindled into one intense and passionate effervescence of romantic passion. He saw and won the love of a high-minded and beautiful woman, in one of the northern states, and they were affianced. He returned south to make arrangements for their marriage, when, most unexpectedly, his letters were returned to him by mail, with a short note from her guardian, stating to him that ere this reached him the lady would be the wife of another. Stung to madness, he vainly hoped, as many another has done, to fling the whole thing from his heart by one desperate effort. Too proud to supplicate or seek explanation, he threw himself at once into a whirl of fashionable society, and in a fortnight from the time of the fatal letter was the accepted lover of the reigning belle of the season; and as soon as arrangements could be made, he became the husband of a fine figure, a pair of bright, dark

eyes, and a hundred thousand dollars, and, of course, everybody thought him a happy fellow.

The married couple were enjoying their honeymoon, and entertaining a brilliant circle of friends in their splendid villa near Lake Pontchartrain, when, one day, a letter was brought to him in *that* well-remembered writing. In his room, alone, he opened and read the letter, now worse than idle and useless to be read. It was from her, giving a long account of a persecution to which she had been exposed by her guardian's family, to lead her to unite herself with their son; and she related how, for a long time, his letters had ceased to arrive; how she had written time and again, till she became weary and doubtful; how her health had failed under her anxieties, and how, at last, she had discovered the whole fraud which had been practised on them both. The letter ended with expressions of hope and thankfulness, and professions of undying affection, which were more bitter than death to the unhappy young man. He wrote to her immediately:

"I have received yours—but too late. I believed all I heard. I was desperate. *I am married*, and all is over. Only forget—it is all that remains for either of us."

And thus ended the whole romance and ideal of life for Augustine St. Clare. Had his wife been a whole woman, she might yet have done something—as woman can—to mend the broken threads of life, and weave again into a tissue of brightness. But Marie St. Clare could not even see that they had been broken. As before stated, she consisted of a fine figure, a pair of splendid eyes, and a hundred thousand dollars; and these items were not precisely the ones to minister to a mind diseased.

Augustine was glad in his heart that he had married so undiscerning a woman; but as the glosses and civilities of the honeymoon wore away, he discovered that a beautiful young woman, who has lived all her life to be caressed and waited on, might prove quite a hard mistress in domestic life. Marie never had possessed much capability of affection or much sensibility; and the little that she had had merged into a most intense and unconscious selfishness—a selfishness the more hopeless from its quiet obtuseness, its utter ignorance of any claims but her own. It is a great mistake to

suppose that a woman with no heart will be an easy creditor in the exchange of affection. There is not on earth a more merciless exacter of love from others than a thoroughly selfish woman; and the more unlovely she grows, the more jealousy and scrupulously she exacts love, to the uttermost farthing. When, therefore, St. Clare began to drop off those gallantries and small attentions which flowed at first through the habitude of courtship, he found his sultana no way ready to resign her slave; there were abundance of tears, poutings, and small tempests—there were discontents, pinings, upbraidings. St. Clare was good-natured and self-indulgent, and sought to buy off with presents and flatteries; and when Marie became mother to a beautiful daughter, he really felt awakened, for a time, to something like tenderness.

St. Clare's mother had been a woman of uncommon elevation and purity of character, and he gave to this child his mother's name, fondly fancying that she would prove a reproduction of her image. The thing had been remarked with petulant jealousy by his wife, and she regarded her husband's absorbing devotion to the child with suspicion and dislike; all that was given to her seemed so much taken from herself. From the time of the birth of this child her health gradually sank. A life of constant inaction, bodily and mental—the friction of ceaseless *ennui* and discontent, united to the ordinary weakness which attended the period of maternity—in course of a few years changed the blooming young belle into a yellow, faded, sickly woman, whose time was divided among a variety of fanciful diseases, and who considered herself in every sense, the most ill-used and suffering person in existence.

There was no end of her various complaints; but her principal forte appeared to lie in sick-headache, which sometimes would confine her to her room three days out of six. As, of course, all family arrangements fell into the hands of servants, St. Clare found his *ménage* anything but comfortable. His only daughter was exceedingly delicate, and he feared that, with no one to look after her and attend to her, her health and life might yet fall a sacrifice to her mother's inefficiency. He had taken her with him on a tour to Vermont, and had persuaded his

cousin, Miss Ophelia St. Clare, to return with him to his southern residence; and they are now returning on this boat, where we have introduced them to our readers.

And now, while the distant domes and spires of New Orleans rise to our view, there is yet time for an introduction to Miss Ophelia.

Whoever has travelled in the New England States will remember, in some cool village, the large farmhouse, with its clean-swept grassy yard, shaded by the dense and massive foliage of the sugar-maple; and remember the air of order and stillness, of perpetuity and unchanging repose, that seemed to breathe over the whole place.

On such a farm, in such a house and family, Miss Ophelia had spent a quiet existence of some forty-five years, when her cousin invited her to visit his southern mansion. The eldest of a large family, she was still considered by her father and mother as one of "the children"; and the proposal that she should go to Orleans was a most momentous one to the family circle. The old grey-headed father took down Morse's Atlas out of the bookcase, and looked out the exact latitude and longitude, and read Flint's "Travels in the South and West," to make up his own mind as to the nature of the country.

The good mother inquired anxiously, "if Orleans wasn't an awful wicked place?" saying "that it seemed to her most equal to going to the Sandwich Islands, or anywhere among the heathen."

Miss Ophelia, as you now behold her, stands before you, in a very shining brown travelling dress, tall, square-formed, and angular. Her face was thin, and rather sharp in its outlines; the lips compressed, like those of a person who is in the habit of making up her mind definitely on all subjects; while the keen, dark eyes had a peculiarly searching, advised movement, and travelled over everything, as if they were looking for something to take care of.

In her habits, she was a living impersonation of order, method and exactness. In punctuality, she was as inevitable as a clock and as inexorable as a railroad-engine; and she held in most decided contempt and abomination anything of a contrary character.

The great sin of sins, in her eye—the sum of all evils—

was expressed by one very common and important word in her vocabulary—"shiftlessness."

The boat now began, with heavy groans, like some vast, tired monster, to prepare to push up among the multiplied steamers at the levee.

And now ensued the usual turmoil of landing—waiters running twenty ways at once—men tugging trunks, carpet-bags, boxes—women anxiously calling to their children, and everybody crowding in a dense mass to the plank towards the landing.

Miss Ophelia seated herself resolutely on the lately vanquished trunk, and, marshalling all her goods and chattels in fine military order, seemed resolved to defend them to the last.

Just as she had begun to work herself into a real distress about the absence of her cousin, he came up with his usually careless motion and giving Eva a quarter of the orange he was eating, said:

"Well, Cousin Vermont, I suppose you are all ready?"

"I've been ready, waiting nearly an hour," said Miss Ophelia; "I began to be really concerned about you."

"Well, the carriage is waiting and the crowd are now off, so that one can walk out in a decent and Christian manner, and not be pushed and shoved. Here," he added to a driver who stood behind him, "take these things."

"Where's Tom?" said Eva.

"Oh, he's on the outside, pussy. I'm going to take Tom up to mother for a peace-offering, to make up for that drunken fellow that upset the carriage."

"Oh, Tom will make a splendid driver, I know!" said Eva; he'll never get drunk."

The carriage stopped in front of an ancient mansion, built in that odd mixture of Spanish and French style, of which there are specimens in some parts of New Orleans. It was built in the Moorish fashion—a square building enclosing a courtyard into which the carriage drove through an arched gateway. The court, in the inside, had evidently been arranged to gratify a picturesque and voluptuous ideality. Wide galleries ran all around the four sides, whose Moorish arches, slender pillars, and arabesque ornaments carried the mind back as in a dream, to the

reign of Oriental romance in Spain. In the middle of the court, a fountain threw high its silvery water, falling in a never-ceasing spray into a marble basin, fringed with a deep border of fragrant violets.

The galleries that surrounded the court were festooned with a curtain of some kind of Moorish stuff, and could be drawn down at pleasure, to exclude the beams of the sun. On the whole the appearance of the place was luxurious and romantic.

Tom got down from the carriage, and looked about with an air of calm, still enjoyment. The negro, it must be remembered, is an exotic of the most gorgeous and superb countries of the world, and he has deep in his heart a passion for all that is splendid, rich and fanciful; a passion which, rudely indulged by an untrained taste, draws on them the ridicule of the colder and more correct white race.

St. Clare, who was in his heart a poetical voluptuary, turning to Tom, who was standing looking round, his beaming black face perfectly radiant with admiration, said:

"Tom, my boy, this seems to suit you."

"Yes, mas'r, it looks about the right thing," said Tom.

All this passed in a moment, while trunks were being hustled off, hackman paid, and while a crowd of all ages and sizes—men, women, and children—came running through the galleries, both above and below, to see mas'r come in. Foremost among them was a highly-dressed young mulatto man, evidently a very *distingué* personage, attired in the ultra extreme of the mode, and gracefully waving a scented cambric handkerchief in his hand.

This personage had been exerting himself, with great alacrity in driving all the flock of domestics to the other end of the verandah.

"Back all of you! I am ashamed of you!" he said in a tone of authority. "Would you intrude on master's domestic relations in the first hour of his return?"

All looked abashed at this elegant speech, delivered with quite an air, and stood huddled together at a respectful distance, except two stout porters, who came up and began conveying away the baggage. Owing to Mr. Adolph's systematic arrangements, when St. Clare turned round

from paying the hackman, there was nobody in view but Mr. Adolph himself, conspicuous in satin vest, gold guard chain, and white pants, and bowing with inexpressible grace and suavity.

"Ah, Adolph, is it you?" said his master, offering his hand to him; "how are you, boy!" while Adolph poured forth, with great fluency, an extemporary speech which he had been preparing, with great care, for a fortnight before.

"Well, well," said St. Clare, passing on with his usual air of negligent drollery, "that's very well got up, Adolph. See that the baggage is well bestowed. I'll come to the people in a minute"; and so saying he led Miss Ophelia to a large parlour that opened on to the verandah.

While this had been passing, Eva had flown like a bird through the porch and parlour, to a little boudoir opening likewise on the verandah.

A tall, dark-eyed, sallow woman hald rose from a couch on which she was reclining.

"Mamma!" said Eva, in a sort of rapture, throwing herself on her neck, and embracing her over and over again.

"That'll do—take care, child—don't you make my head ache!" said the mother, after she had languidly kissed her.

St. Clare came in, embraced his wife in true, orthodox, husbandly fashion, and then presented to her his cousin. Marie lifted her large eyes on her cousin with an air of some curiosity and received her with languid politeness.

"Here, Tom," said St. Clare, beckoning.

Tom entered the room.

"See here, Marie," said St. Clare to his wife, "I've brought you a coachman at last, to order. I tell you he's a regular hearse for blackness and sobriety, and will drive you like a funeral, if you want. Open your eyes, now, and look at him. Now, don't say I never think about you when I'm gone."

Marie opened her eyes, and fixed them on Tom, without rising.

"I know he'll get drunk," she said.

"No, he's warranted a pious and sober article."

"Well, I hope he may turn out well," said the lady; "it's more than I expect, though."

"'Dolph," said St. Clare, "show Tom downstairs."

Adolph tripped gracefully forward, and Tom, with lumbering tread, went after.

"He's a perfect behemoth!" said Marie.

"Come now, Marie," said St. Clare, seating himself on a stool beside her sofa, "be gracious and say something pretty to a fellow."

"You've been gone a fortnight beyond the time," said the lady, pouting.

"Well, you know I wrote you the reason."

"Such a short cold letter!" said the lady.

"Dear me! the mail was just going, and it had to be that or nothing."

"That's just the way always," said the lady; "always something to make your journeys long and letters short."

"See here, now," he added, drawing an elegant velvet case out of his pocket, and opening it; "here's a present I got for you in New York." It was a daguerreotype, clear and soft as an engraving, representing Eva and her father sitting hand in hand.

Marie looked at it with a dissatisfied air.

"What made you sit in such an awkward position?" she said.

"Well, the position may be a matter of opinion; but what do you think of the likeness?"

"If you don't think anything of my opinion in one case, I suppose you wouldn't in another," said the lady, shutting the daguerreotype.

"Hang the women!" said St. Clare mentally; but aloud he added, "Come now, Marie, what do you think of the likeness? Don't be nonsensical now."

"It's very inconsiderate of you, St. Clare," said the lady "to insist on my talking and looking at things. You know I've been lying all day with the sick-headache; and there's been such a tumult made ever since you came, I'm half dead."

"You're subject to the sick-headache, ma'am?" said Miss Ophelia, suddenly rising from the depths of the large arm-chair, where she had sat quietly taking an inventory of the furniture and calculating its expense.

"Yes, I'm a perfect martyr to it," said the lady.

"Juniper-berry tea is good for sick-headache," said Miss Ophelia; "at least, Auguste, Deacon Abraham Perry's wife, used to say so; and she was a great nurse."

"I'll have the first juniper-berries that get ripe in our garden by the lake brought in for that especial purpose," said St. Clare gravely, pulling the bell as he did so; "meanwhile, cousin, you must be wanting to retire to your apartment, and refresh yourself a little, after your journey. 'Dolph," he added, "tell Mammy to come here." A decent mulatto woman soon entered; she was dressed neatly, with a high red and yellow turban on her head. "Mammy," said St. Clare, "I put this lady under your care; she is tired, and wants rest. Take her to her chamber, and be sure she is made comfortable"; and Miss Ophelia disappeared in the rear of Mammy.

CHAPTER XV

TOM'S MISTRESS AND HER OPINIONS

"And now, Marie," said St. Clare, "your golden days are dawning. Here is our practical, business-like New England cousin, who will take the whole budget of cares off your shoulders, and give you time to refresh yourself, and grow young and handsome. The ceremony of delivering the keys had better come off forthwith."

This remark was made at the breakfast-table, a few mornings after Miss Ophelia had arrived.

"I'm sure she's welcome," said Marie, leaning her head languidly on her hand. "I think she'll find one thing if she does; and that is, that it's we mistresses that are the slaves, down here."

"Oh, certainly, she will discover that, and a world of wholesome truths besides, no doubt!" said St. Clare.

"Talk about our keeping slaves, as if we did it for our *convenience*," said Marie. "I'm sure, if we consulted *that*, we might let them all go at once."

Evangeline fixed her large, serious eyes on her mother's face, with an earnest and perplexed expression, and said simply. "What do you keep them for, mamma?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, except for a plague; the plague of my life. I believe that more of my ill-health is caused by them than by any one thing; and ours, I know, are the very worst that ever anybody was plagued with."

Miss Ophelia sat in blank silence.

"You see," Marie continued, in a faint and lady-like voice, like the last dying breath of an Arabian jessamine, or something equally ethereal, "you see, Cousin Ophelia, I don't often speak of myself. It isn't my *habit*; 'tisn't agreeable to me. In fact, I haven't strength to do it. But there are points where St. Clare and I differ. St. Clare never understood me, never appreciated me. I think it lies at the root of all my ill-health. St. Clare means well, I am bound to believe; but men are constitutionally selfish and inconsiderate to women. That, at least, is my impression."

Miss Ophelia, who had not a small share of the genuine New England caution and a very particular horror of being drawn into family difficulties, now began to knit most energetically, shutting her lips together in a way that said, as plain as words could, "You needn't try to make me speak. I don't want anything to do with your affairs"—in fact, she looked about as sympathising as a stone lion.

"Oh, come, Marie," said her husband, "the day is growing warm, and I have just had a long quarrel with 'Dolph, which has fatigued me excessively; so, pray be agreeable now, and let a fellow repose in the light of your smile."

"What's the matter about 'Dolph?" said Marie. "That fellow's impudence has been growing to a point that is perfectly intolerable to me. I only wish I had the undisputed management of him a while. I'd bring him down!"

"What you say, my dear, is marked with your usual acuteness and good sense," said St. Clare. "As to 'Dolph, the case is this: that he has so long been engaged in imitating my graces and perfections, that he has at last really mistaken himself for his master; and I have been obliged to give him a little insight into his mistake."

"How?" said Marie.

"Why, I was obliged to let him understand explicitly

that I preferred to keep *some* of my clothes for my own personal wearing; also, I put his magnificence upon an allowance of Cologne water, and actually was so cruel as to restrict him to one dozen of my cambric handkerchiefs. 'Dolph was particularly huffy about it, and I had to talk to him like a father to bring him round."

"Oh, St. Clare, when will you learn how to treat your servants? It's abominable, the way you indulge them!" said Marie.

"Why, after all, what's the harm of the poor dog's wanting to be like his master? And if I haven't brought him up any better than to find his chief good in cologne and handkerchiefs, why shouldn't I give them to him?"

"And why haven't you brought him up better?" said Miss Ophelia, with blunt determination.

"Too much trouble; laziness, cousin, laziness—which ruins more souls than you can shake a stick at. If it weren't for laziness, I should have been a perfect angel myself. I'm inclined to think that laziness is what your old Dr. Botherem, up in Vermont, used to call the 'essence of moral evil.' It's an awful consideration, certainly."

"I think you slaveholders have an awful responsibility upon you," said Miss Ophelia. "I wouldn't have it for a thousand worlds. You ought to educate your slaves, and treat them like reasonable creatures, like immortal creatures, that you've got to stand before the bar of God with. That's my mind," said the good lady, breaking suddenly out with a tide of zeal that had been gaining strength in her mind all the morning.

A gay laugh from the court rang through the silken curtains of the verandah. St. Clare stepped out, and, lifting up the curtain, laughed too.

"What is it?" said Miss Ophelia, coming to the railing. There sat Tom, on a little mossy seat in the court, every one of his buttonholes stock full of cape jessamines; and Eva, gaily laughing, was hanging a wreath of roses round his neck; and then she sat down on his knee like a chip-sparrow, still laughing.

"Oh, Tom, you look so funny!"

Tom had a sober, benevolent smile, and seemed, in his quiet way, to be enjoying the fun quite as much as his little

mistress. He lifted his eyes, when he saw his master, with a half-deprecating, apologetic air.

In Tom's external situation, at this time, there was, as the world says, nothing to complain of. Little Eva's fancy for him—the instinctive gratitude and loveliness of a noble nature—had led her to petition her father that he might be her special attendant, whenever she needed the escort of a servant, in her walks or rides; and Tom had general orders to let everything else go, and attend to Miss Eva whenever she wanted him—orders which our readers may fancy were far from disagreeable to him. He was kept well dressed, for St. Clare was fastidiously particular on this point. His stable services were merely a sinecure, simply consisted in a daily care and inspection, and directing an under-servant in his duties; for Marie St. Clare declared that she could not have any smell of the horses about him when he came near her, and that he must positively not be put to any service that would make him unpleasant to her, as her nervous system was entirely inadequate to any trial of that nature: one sniff of anything disagreeable being, according to her account, quite sufficient to close the scene, and put an end to all her earthly trials at once. Tom, therefore, in his well-brushed broadcloth suit, smooth beaver, glossy boots, faultless wristbands and collar, with his grave good-natured black face, looked respectable enough to be a Bishop of Carthage, as men of his colour were in other ages.

Marie St. Clare stood, gorgeously dressed, on the verandah, one Sunday morning, clasping a diamond bracelet on her slender wrist. Marie patronised good things, and she was going now in full dress—diamonds, silk, and lace, and jewels, and all—to a fashionable church, to be very religious. Marie always made a point to be very pious on Sundays. Miss Ophelia stood at her side, a perfect contrast. It was not that she had not as handsome a silk dress and shawl, and as fine a pocket-handkerchief; but stiffness, and squareness, and bolt-uprightness, enveloped her with as indefinite yet appreciable a presence as did grace her elegant neighbour: not the grace of God, however —that is quite another thing!

"Where's Eva?" said Marie.

"The child stopped on the stairs to say something to Mammy."

And what was Eva saying to Mammy on the stairs? Listen, reader, and you will hear, though Marie does not.

"Dear Mammy, I know your head is aching dreadfully."

"Lord bless you, Miss Eva! my head allers aches lately. You don't need to worry."

"Well, I'm glad you're going out; and here"—and the little girl threw her arms around her—"Mammy, you shall take my vinaigrette."

"What! your beautiful gold thing, thar, with them diamonds! Lor, miss, 'twouldn't be proper, no ways.'

"Why not? You need it, and I don't. Mamma always uses it for headache, and it'll make you feel better. No, you shall take it, to please me, now."

"Do hear the darling talk!" said Mammy, as Eva thrust it into her bosom, and kissing her, ran downstairs to her mother.

"What were you stopping for?"

"I was just stopping to give Mammy my vinaigrette, to take to church with her."

"Eva!" said Marie, stamping impatiently, "your gold vinaigrette to *Mammy*! When will you learn what's *proper?* Go right and take it back this moment!"

Eva looked downcast and aggrieved, and turned slowly.

"I say, Marie, let the child alone; she shall do as she pleases," said St. Clare.

"St. Clare, how will she ever get along in the world?" said Marie.

"The Lord knows," said St. Clare; "but she'll get along in heaven better than you or I."

"Oh, papa, don't!" said Eva, softly touching his elbow; "it troubles mother."

"Well, cousin, are you ready to go to meeting?" said Miss Ophelia, turning square about on St. Clare.

"I'm not going, thank you. Eva, do you like to go? Come, stay at home and play with me."

"Thank you, papa; but I'd rather go to church."

"Isn't it dreadful tiresome?" said St. Clare.

"I think it is rather tiresome," said Eva, "and I am sleepy, too, but I try to keep awake."

"What do you go for, then?"

"Why, you know, papa," she said, in a whisper, "cousin told me that God wants to have us; and He gives us everything, you know; and it isn't much to do it, if He wants us to. It isn't so very tiresome after all."

"You sweet little obliging soul!" said St. Clare, kissing her. "Go along, that's a good girl, and pray for me."

"Certainly, I always do," said the child, as she sprang after her mother into the carriage.

St. Clare stood on the steps and kissed his hand to her, as the carriage drove away; large tears were in his eyes.

"Oh, Evangeline! rightly named," he said; "hath not God made thee an evangel to me?"

So he felt a moment; and then he smoked a cigar, and read the *Picayune*, and forgot his little gospel. Was he much unlike other folks?

"You see, Evangeline," said her mother, "it's always right and proper to be kind to servants; but it isn't proper to treat them *just* as we would our relations, or people in our own class of life. Now, if Mammy was sick, you wouldn't want to put her in your own bed."

"I should feel just like it, mamma," said Eva, "because then it would be handier to take care of her, and because, you know, my bed is better than hers."

Marie was in utter despair at the entire want of moral perception evinced in this reply.

"What can I do to make this child understand me?" she said.

"Nothing," said Miss Ophelia significantly.

Eva looked sorry and disconcerted for a moment; but children, luckily, do not keep to one impression long; and in a few moments she was merrily laughing at various things which she saw from the coach-windows, as it rattled along.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FREEMAN'S DEFENCE

THERE was a gentle bustle at the Quaker's house, as the afternoon drew to a close. Rachel Halliday moved quietly to and fro, collecting from her household stores such

needments as could be arranged in the smallest compass for the wanderers who were to go forth that night. The afternoon shadows stretched eastward, and the round red sun stood thoughtfully on the horizon, and his beams shone yellow and calm into the little bedroom where George and his wife were sitting. He was sitting with his child on his knee, and his wife's hand in his. Both looked thoughtful and serious, and traces of tears were on their cheeks.

At this moment, voices were heard in the outer apartment, in earnest conversation, and very soon a rap was heard at the door. Eliza started and opened it.

Simeon Halliday was there, and with him a Quaker brother, whom he introduced as Phineas Fletcher. Phineas was tall and lathy, red-haired, with an expression of great acuteness and shrewdness in his face. He had not the placid, quiet, unworldly air of Simeon Halliday; on the contrary, a particularly wideawake and *au-fait* appearance, like a man who rather prides himself on knowing what he is about, and keeping a bright look-out ahead—peculiarities which sorted rather oddly with his broad brim and formal phraseology.

"Our friend Phineas has discovered something of importance to the interest of thee and thy party, George," said Simeon; "it were well for thee to hear it."

"That I have," said Phineas; "and it shows the use of a man's always sleeping with one ear open, in certain places, as I've always said. Last night I stopped at a little lone tavern back on the road. Thee remembers the place, Simeon, where we sold some apples, last year, to that fat woman with the great ear-rings. Well, I was tired with hard driving; and after my supper, I stretched myself on a pile of bags in the corner, and pulled a buffalo over me, to wait till my bed was ready; and what does I do, but get fast asleep."

"With one ear open, Phineas?" said Simeon quietly.

"No! I slept, ears and all, for an hour or two, for I was pretty well tired; but when I came to myself a little, I found that there were some men in the room, sitting round a table, drinking and talking; and I thought, before I made much muster, I'd just see what they were up to, especially as I heard them say something about the Quakers. 'So,'

says one, whose name is Marks, 'they are up in the Quaker settlement, no doubt,' says he. Then I listened with both ears, and I found that they were talking about this very party. So I lay and heard them lay off all their plans. This young man, they said, was to be sent back to Kentucky, to his master, who was going to make an example of him, to keep all niggers from running away; and his wife, two of them, Marks and another chap called Tom Loker, were going to run down to New Orleans to sell on their own account, and they calculated to get sixteen or eighteen hundred dollars for her; and the child, they said, was going to a trader who had bought him; and then there was the boy Jim, and his mother, they were to go back to their masters in Kentucky. They said that there were two constables, in a town a little piece ahead, who would go in with 'em to get 'em taken up, and the young woman was to be taken before a judge; and one of the fellows, who is small and smooth-spoken, was to swear to her for his property, and get her delivered over to him to take south. They've got a right notion of the track we are going to-night; and they'll be down after us, six or eight strong. So, now, what's to be done?"

The group that stood in various attitudes, after this communication were worthy of a painter. Rachel Halliday, who had taken her hands out of a batch of biscuit to hear the news, stood with them upraised and floury, and with a face of the deepest concern. Simeon looked profoundly thoughtful; Eliza had thrown her arms around her husband and was looking up to him. George stood with clenched hands and glowing eyes, and looking as any other man might look whose wife was to be sold at auction, and son sent to a trader, all under the shelter of a Christian nation's laws.

"What *shall* we do, George?" said Eliza faintly.

"I know what *I* shall do," said George, as he stepped into the little room, and began examining his pistols.

"Ay, ay," said Phineas, nodding his head to Simeon; "thou seest, Simeon, how it will work."

"I see," said Simeon, sighing. "I pray it come not to that."

"I don't want to involve any one with or for me," said George. "If you will lend me your vehicle and direct me, I

will drive alone to the next stand. Jim is a giant in strength and brave as death and despair, and so am I."

"Ah, well, friend," said Phineas, "but thee'll need a driver, for all that. Thee's quite welcome to do all the fighting, thee knows; but I know a thing or two about the road that thee doesn't."

"But I don't want to involve you," said George.

"Involve?" said Phineas, with a curious and keen expression of face. "When thee does involve me, please to let me know."

"Phineas is a wise and skilful man," said Simeon. "Thee does well, George to abide by his judgment; and," he added, laying his hand kindly on George's shoulder, and pointing to the pistols, "be not over hasty with these—young blood is hot."

"I will attack no man," said George. "All I ask of this country is to be let alone, and I will go out peaceably; but"—he paused, and his brow darkened, and his face worked—"I've had a sister sold in that New Orleans market. I know what they are sold for; and am I going to stand by and see them take my wife and sell her, when God has given me a pair of strong arms to defend her? No; God help me! I'll fight to the last breath, before they shall take my wife and son. Can you blame me?"

"Mortal man cannot blame thee, George. Flesh and blood could not do otherwise," said Simeon. "Woe unto the world because of offences, but woe unto them through whom the offence cometh."

"Would not even you, sir, do the same, in my place?"

"I pray that I be not tried," said Simeon; "the flesh is very weak."

"I think my flesh would be pretty tolerable strong in such a case," said Phineas, stretching out a pair of arms like the sails of a windmill. "I an't sure, friend George, that I shouldn't hold a fellow for thee, if thee had any accounts to settle with him."

"Friend Phineas will ever have ways of his own," said Rachel Halliday, smiling; "but we all think that his heart is in the right place, after all."

"Well, said George, "isn't it best that we hasten our flight?"

"I got up at four o'clock, and came on with all speed, full two or three hours ahead of them, if they start at the time they planned. It isn't safe to start till dark, at any rate; for there are some evil persons in the village ahead that might be disposed to meddle with us, if they saw our wagon, and that would delay us more than the waiting; but in two hours I think we may venture. I will go over to Michael Cross, and engage him to come behind on his swift nag, and keep a bright look-out on the road, and warn us if any company of men come on. Michael keeps a horse that can soon get ahead of most other horses; and he could shoot ahead, and let us know, if there were any danger. I am going out now to warn Jim and the other woman to be in readiness, and to see about the horses. We have a pretty fair start, and stand a good chance to get to the stand before they can come up with us. So, have good courage, friend George; this isn't the first ugly scrape that I've been in with thy people," said Phineas, as he closed the door.

While Rachel and her children were busy making corn-cake, and cooking ham and chicken, and hurrying on the *etcetcras* of the evening meal, George and his wife sat in their little room, with their arms folded about each other, in such talk as husband and wife have when they know that a few hours may part them for ever.

And now Rachel took Eliza's hand kindly, and led the way to the supper-table.

A little while after supper, a large covered wagon drew up before the door; the night was clear starlight, and Phineas jumped briskly down from his seat to arrange his passengers. George walked out of the door, with his child on one arm and his wife on the other. His step was firm, his face settled and resolute. Rachel and Simeon came out after them.

"You get out a moment," said Phineas to those inside, "and let me fix the back of the wagon, there, for the women-folks and the boy."

"Here are the two buffaloes," said Rachel. "Make the seats as comfortable as may be; it's hard riding all night."

Jim came out first, and carefully assisted his old mother, who clung to his arm and looked anxiously about, as if she expected the pursuer every moment.

"Jim, are your pistols all in order?" said George, in a low, firm voice.

"Yes, indeed," said Jim.

"And you've no doubt what you shall do if they come?"

"I rather think I haven't," said Jim, throwing open his broad chest, and taking a deep breath. "Do you think I'll let them get mother again?"

During this brief colloquy, Eliza had been taking her leave of her kind friend, Rachel, and was handed into the carriage by Simeon, and creeping into the back part with her boy, sat down among the buffalo-skins. The old woman was next handed in and seated, and George and Jim placed on a rough board seat in front of them, and Phineas mounted in front.

"Farewell, my friend," said Simeon, from without.

"God bless you!" answered all from within.

And the wagon drove off, rattling and jolting over the frozen road.

There was no opportunity for conversation, on account of the roughness of the way and the noise of the wheels. The vehicle therefore rumbled on, through long dark stretches of woodland, over wide dreary plains, up hills and down valleys, and on, on, they jogged, hour after hour. The child soon fell asleep, and lay heavily in his mother's lap. The poor frightened old woman at last forgot her fears; and even Eliza, as the night waned, found all her anxieties insufficient to keep her eyes from closing. Phineas seemed, on the whole, the briskest of the company, and beguiled his long drive with whistling certain un-Quaker songs as he went on.

But about three o'clock George's ear caught the hasty and decided click of a horse's hoof coming behind them at some distance, and jogged Phineas by the elbow. Phineas pulled up his horses and listened.

"That must be Michael," he said. "I think I know the sound of his gallop"; and he rose up and stretched his head anxiously back over the road.

A man riding in hot haste was now dimly descried at the top of a distant hill.

"There he is, I do believe!" said Phineas. George and Jim both sprang out of the wagon, before they knew what

they were doing. All stood intensely silent, with their faces turned towards the expected messenger. On he came. Now he went down into a valley, where they could not see him; but they heard the sharp, hasty tramp rising nearer and nearer; at last they saw him emerge on the top of an eminence, within hail.

"Yes, that's Michael!" said Phineas; and, raising his voice, "Halloa, there, Michael!"

"Phineas! is that thee?"

"Yes; what news?—they coming?"

"Right on behind, eight or ten of them, hot with brandy, swearing and foaming like so many wolves!"

And just as he spoke, a breeze brought the faint sound of galloping horsemen towards them.

"In with you—quick boys, *in*!" said Phineas. "If you must fight, wait till I get you a piece ahead." And, with the word, both jumped in, and Phineas lashed the horses to a run, the horseman keeping close beside them. The wagon rattled, jumped, almost flew over the frozen ground; but plainer, and still plainer, came the noise of pursuing horsemen behind. The women heard it, and, looking anxiously out, saw, far in the rear, on the brow of a distant hill, a party of men looming up against the red-streaked sky of early dawn. Another hill, and their pursuers had evidently caught sight of their wagon, whose white cloth-covered top made it conspicuous at some distance, and a loud yell of brutal triumph came forward on the wind. Eliza sickened, and strained her child closer to her bosom; the old woman prayed and groaned, and George and Jim clenched their pistols with the grasp of despair. The pursuers gained on them fast; the carriage made a sudden turn, and brought them near a ledge of a steep overhanging rock, that rose in an isolated ridge or clump in a large lot, which was, all around it, quite clear and smooth. This isolated pile, or range of rocks, rose up black and heavy against the brightening sky, and seemed to promise shelter and concealment. It was a place well known to Phineas, who had been familiar with the spot in his hunting-days; and it was to gain this point he had been racing his horses.

"Now for it!" said he, suddenly checking his horses, and springing from his seat to the ground. "Out with you, in a

twinkling, every one, and up into these rocks with me. Michael, thee tie thy horse to the wagon, and drive ahead to Amariah's and get him and his boys to come back and talk to these fellows."

In a twinkling they were all out of the carriage.

"There," said Phineas, catching up Harry, "you each of you see to the women; and run, *now*, if you ever *did*, run."

They needed no exhortation. Quicker than we can say it, the whole party were over the fence, making with all speed for the rocks, while Michael, throwing himself from his horse, and fastening the bridle to the wagon, began driving it rapidly away.

"Come ahead," said Phineas, as they reached the rocks, and saw, in the mingled starlight and dawn, the traces of a rude, but plainly marked footpath leading up among them; "this is one of our old hunting dens. Come up."

Phineas went before, springing up the rocks like a goat, with the boy in his arms. Jim came second bearing his trembling old mother over his shoulder, and George and Eliza brought up the rear. The party of horsemen came up to the fence, and, with mingled shouts and oaths, were dismounting to prepare to follow them. A few moments' scrambling brought them to the top of the ledge; the path then passed between a narrow defile, where only one could walk at a time, till suddenly they came to a rift or chasm more than a yard in breadth, and beyond which lay a pile of rocks, separate from the rest of the ledge, standing full thirty feet high, with its sides steep and perpendicular as those of a castle. Phineas easily leaped the chasm, and sat down the boy on a smooth, flat platform of crisp white moss that covered the top of the rock.

"Over with you!" he called; "spring now, once, for your lives!" said he, as one after another sprang across. Several fragments of loose stone formed a kind of breast-work, which sheltered their position from the observation of those below.

"Well, here we all are," said Phineas, peeping over the stone breastwork to watch the assailants, who were coming tumultuously up under the rocks. "Let 'em get us if they can. Whoever comes here has to walk single file between

those two rocks, in fair range of your pistols, boys, d'ye see?"

"I do see," said George; "and now, as this matter is ours, let us take all the risk, and do all the fighting."

"Thee's quite welcome to do the fighting, George," said Phineas, chewing some checkerberry-leaves as he spoke; "but I may have the fun of looking on, I suppose. But see, these fellows are kinder debating down there, and looking up, like hens when they are going to fly up on to the roost. Hadn't thee better give 'em a word of advice, before they come up, just to tell 'em handsomely they'll be shot if they do?"

The party beneath, now more apparent in the light of the dawn, consisted of Tom Loker and Marks, with two constables, and a posse consisting of such rowdies at the last tavern as could be engaged by a little brandy to go and help the fun of trapping a set of niggers.

"Well, Tom, yer coons are farly treed," said one.

"Yes, I see 'em go up right here," said Tom; "and here's a path. I'm for going right up. They can't jump down in a hurry, and it won't take long to ferret 'em out."

"But Tom, they might fire at us from behind the rocks," said Marks. "That would be ugly, you know."

"Ugh!" said Tom, with a sneer. "Always for saving your skin, Marks! No danger! niggers are too plaguy scared!"

"I don't know why I *shouldn't* save my skin," said Marks. "It's the best I've got; and niggers *do* fight like the devil, sometimes."

At the moment George appeared on the top of a rock above them, and, speaking in a calm, clear voice, said:

"Gentlemen, who are you, down there, and what do you want?"

"We want a party of runaway niggers," said Tom Loker. "One George Harris, and Eliza Harris and their son, and Jim Selden, and an old woman. We've got the officers here, and a warrant to take 'em; and we're going to have 'em, too. D'ye hear? An't you George Harris, that belongs to Mr. Harris, of Shelby county, Kentucky?"

"I am George Harris. A Mr. Harris of Kentucky did call me his property. But now I'm a freeman, standing on

God's free soil ; and my wife and my child I claim as mine. Jim and his mother are here. We have arms to defend ourselves, and we mean to do it. You can come up if you like ; but the first one of you that comes within the range of our bullets is a dead man, and the next, and the next ; and so on till the last.

" Oh, come ! come ! " said a short, puffy man, stepping forward, and blowing his nose as he did so. " Young man, this an't no kind of talk at all for you. You see, we're officers of justice. We've got the law on our side, and the power, and so forth ; so you'd better give up peaceably, you see ; for you'll certainly have to give up at last."

" I know very well that you've got the law on your side and the power," said George bitterly. " You mean to take my wife to sell in New Orleans, and put my boy like a calf in a trader's pen, and send Jim's old mother to the brute that whipped and abused her before, because he couldn't abuse her son. You want to send Jim and me back to be whipped and tortured, and ground down under the heels of them that you call masters ; and your laws *will* bear you out in it—more shame for you and them ! But you haven't got us. We don't own your laws ; we don't own your country ; we stand here as free, under God's sky, as you are ; and by the great God that made us, we'll fight for our liberty till we die ! "

George stood out in fair sight, on the top of the rock, as he made his declaration of independence ; the glow of dawn gave a flush to his swarthy cheek, and bitter indignation and despair gave fire to his dark eye ; and, as if appealing from man to the justice of God, he raised his hand to heaven as he spoke.

The attitude, eye, voice, manner of the speaker, for a moment struck the party below to silence. There is something in boldness and determination that for a time hushes even the rudest nature. Marks was the only one who remained wholly untouched. He was deliberately cocking his pistol, and in the momentary silence that followed George's speech, he fired at him.

" Ye see, ye get jist as much for him dead as alive in Kentucky," he said coolly, as he wiped his pistol on his coat-sleeve.

George sprang forward—Eliza uttered a shriek—the ball had passed close to his hair, had nearly grazed the cheek of his wife, and struck in the tree above.

"It's nothing, Eliza," said George quickly.

"Thee'd better keep out of sight, with thy speechifying," said Phineas; "they're mean scamps."

"Now, Jim," said George, "look that your pistols are all right, and watch that pass with me. The first man that shows himself I fire at; you take the second, and so on. It won't do, you know, to waste two shots on one."

"But what if you don't hit?"

"I *shall* hit," said George coolly.

"Good! Now, there's stuff in that fellow," muttered Phineas between his teeth.

The party below, after Marks had fired, stood, for a moment, rather undecided.

"I think you must have hit some on 'em," said one of the men. "I heard a squeal!"

"I'm going right up for one," said Tom. "I never was afraid of niggers, and I an't going to be now. Who goes after?" he said, springing up the rocks.

George heard the words distinctly. He drew up his pistol, examined it, pointed it towards that point in the defile where the first man would appear.

One of the most courageous of the party followed Tom, and the way being thus made, the whole party began pushing up the rock—the hindermost pushing the front ones faster than they would have gone themselves. On they came, and in a moment the burly form of Tom appeared in sight, almost at the verge of the chasm.

George fired—the shot entered Tom's side; but, though wounded, he would not retreat, but, with a yell like that of a mad bull, he was leaping right across the chasm into the party.

"Friend," said Phineas, suddenly stepping to the front, and meeting him with a push from his long arms, "thee isn't wanted here."

Down he fell into the chasm, crackling down among trees, bushes, logs, loose stones, till he lay, bruised and groaning, thirty feet below. The fall might have killed him, had it not been broken and moderated by his clothes catching in the

branches of a large tree; but he came down with some force, however—more than was at all agreeable or convenient.

"Lord, help us! they are perfect devils!" said Marks, heading the retreat down the rocks with much more of a will than he had joined the ascent, while all the party came tumbling precipitately after him—the fat constable, in particular, blowing and puffing in a very energetic manner.

"I say, fellers," said Marks, "you jist go round and pick up Tom, there, while I run and get on to my horse, to go back for help—that's you"; and, without minding the hootings and jeers of his company, Marks was as good as his word, and was soon seen galloping away.

"Was ever such a sneaking varmint?" said one of the men. "To come on his business, and clear out and leave us this yer way!"

"Well, we must pick up that feller," said another. "Cuss me if I much care whether he is dead or alive."

The men, led by the groans of Tom, scrambled and crawled through stumps, logs, and bushes, to where that hero lay groaning and swearing, with alternate vehemence.

"Ye keep it a-going pretty loud, Tom," said one. "Ye much hurt?"

"Don't know. Get me up, can't ye? Blast that infernal Quaker! If it had not been for him, I'd a pitched some of 'em down here, to see how they liked it."

With much labour and groaning, the fallen hero was assisted to rise; and, with one holding him up under each shoulder, they got him as far as the horses.

"If you could only get me a mile back to that ar tavern! Give me a handkerchief or something, to stuff into this place, and stop this infernal bleeding."

George looked over the rocks, and saw them trying to lift the burly form of Tom into the saddle. After two or three ineffectual attempts, he reeled and fell heavily to the ground.

"On my word, they're leaving him, I do believe," said Phineas.

It was true; for, after some appearance of irresolution and consultation, the whole party got on their horses and rode away. When they were quite out of sight, Phineas began to bestir himself.

"Well, we must go down and walk a piece," he said. "I

told Michael to go forward and bring help, and be along back here with the wagon; but we shall have to walk a piece along the road, I reckon, to meet them. The Lord grant he be along soon! It's early in the day; there won't be much travel afoot yet awhile; we an't much more than two miles from our stopping-place. If the road hadn't been so rough last night, we could have outrun 'em entirely."

As the party neared the fence, they discovered in the distance, along the road, their own wagon coming back, accompanied by some men on horseback.

"Well, now, there's Michael, and Stephen, and Amariah," exclaimed Phineas joyfully. "Now we *are* made—as safe as if we'd got there."

"Well, do stop, then," said Eliza, "and do something for that poor man; he's groaning dreadfully."

"It would be no more than Christian," said George; "let's take him up and carry him on."

"And doctor him up among the Quakers!" said Phineas; "pretty well, that! Well, I don't care if we do. Here, let's have a look at him"; and Phineas, who, in the course of his hunting and backwoods life, had acquired some rude experience of surgery, kneeled down by the wounded man, and began a careful examination of his condition.

"Marks," said Tom feebly, "is that you, Marks?"

"No; I reckon 't an't, friend," said Phineas. "Much Marks cares for thee, if his own skin's safe! He's off, long ago."

"I believe I'm done for," said Tom. "The cussed sneaking dog, to leave me to die alone! My poor old mother always told me 'twould be so."

"La sakes! jist hear the poor critter! He's got a mammy now," said the old negress. "I can't help kinder pityin' on him."

"Softly, softly; don't thee snap and snarl, friend," said Phineas, as Tom winced and pushed his head away. "Thee has no chance, unless I stop the bleeding." And Phineas busied himself with making some off-hand surgical arrangements with his own pocket-handkerchief, and such as could be mustered by the company.

"You pushed me down there," said Tom faintly.

"Well, if I hadn't, thee would have pushed us down, thee

sees," said Phineas, as he stooped to apply his bandage. "There, there—let me fix this bandage. We mean well to thee; we bear no malice. Thee shall be taken to a house where they'll nurse thee first-rate—as well as thy own mother could."

Tom groaned, and shut his eyes. In men of his class, vigour and resolution are entirely a physical matter, and ooze out with the flowing of the blood; and the gigantic fellow really looked piteous in his helplessness.

The other party now came up. The seats were taken out of the wagon. The buffalo-skins, doubled in fours, were spread all along one side, and four men, with great difficulty, lifted the heavy form of Tom into it. Before he was got in, he fainted entirely. The old negress, in the abundance of her compassion, sat down on the bottom, and took his head in her lap. Eliza, George, and Jim bestowed themselves, as well as they could, in the remaining space, and the whole party set forward.

"What do you think of him?" said George, who sat by Phineas in front.

"Well, it's only a pretty deep flesh wound; but then tumbling and scratching down that place didn't help him much. It has bled pretty freely—pretty much dreaned him out, courage and all; but he'll get over it, and maybe learn a thing or two by it."

"What shall we do with him?" said George.

"Oh, carry him along to Amariah's. There's old Grandmam Stephens there—Dorcas, they call her—she's most an amazin' nurse. She takes to nursing real natural, and an't never better suited than when she gets a sick boy to tend. We may reckon on turning him over to her for a fortnight or so."

A ride of about an hour brought the party to a neat farmhouse, where the weary travellers were received to an abundant breakfast. Tom Loker was soon carefully deposited in a much cleaner and softer bed than he had ever been in the habit of occupying. His wound was carefully dressed and bandaged, and he lay languidly opening and shutting his eyes on the white window-curtains and gently-gliding figures of his sick-room, like a weary child. And here, for the present we shall take our leave of one party.

CHAPTER XVII

TOM AND EVA

THERE is danger that our humble friend Tom be neglected amid the adventures of Eliza and George; but if our readers will accompany us up to a little loft over the stable, they may, perhaps, learn a little of his affairs. It was a decent room, containing a bed, a chair, and a small, rough stand, where lay Tom's Bible and hymn-book; and where he sits, at present, with his slate before him, intent on something that seems to cost him a great deal of anxious thought.

The fact was, that Tom's home-yearnings had become so strong, that he had begged a sheet of writing-paper of Eva; and mustering up all his small stock of literary attainment acquired by Mas'r George's instructions, he conceived the bold idea of writing a letter; and he was busy now, on his slate, getting out his first draft. Tom was in a good deal of trouble, for the forms of some of the letters he had forgotten entirely, and of what he did remember he did not know exactly which to use. And while he was working, and breathing very hard in his earnestness, Eva alighted, like a bird, on the round of his chair behind him, and peeped over his shoulder.

"O Uncle Tom! what funny things you *are* making there!"

"I'm trying to write to my poor old woman, Miss Eva, and my little chil'en," said Tom, drawing the back of his hand over his eyes; "but somehow, I'm feared I shan't make it out."

"I wish I could help you, Tom! I've learnt to write some. Last year I could make all the letters, but I'm afraid I've forgotten."

So Eva put her little golden head close to his, and the two commenced a grave and anxious discussion, each one equally earnest, and about equally ignorant; and, with a deal of consulting and advising over every word, the composition began, as they both felt very sanguine, to look quite like writing.

"Yes, Uncle Tom, it really begins to look beautiful," said Eva, gazing delighted on it. "How pleased your wife 'll be, and the poor little children! Oh, it's a shame you ever had to go away from them! I mean to ask papa to let you go back, some time."

"Missis said that she would send down money for me, as soon as they could get it together," said Tom. "I'm spectin' she will. Young Mas'r George, he said he'd come for me; and he gave me this yer dollar as a sign"; and Tom drew from under his clothes the precious dollar.

"Oh, he'll certainly come, then!" said Eva. "I'm so glad!"

"And I wanted to send a letter, you know, to let 'em know whar I was, and tell poor Chloe that I was well off, case she felt so dreffal, poor soul!"

"I say, Tom!" said St. Clare's voice, coming in at the door at this moment.

Tom and Eva both started.

"What's here?" said St. Clare, coming up and looking at the slate.

"Oh, it's Tom's letter. I'm helping him to write it," said Eva; "isn't it nice?"

"I wouldn't discourage either of you," said St. Clare, "but I rather think, Tom, you'd better get me to write your letter for you. I'll do it when I come home from my ride."

Tom's letter was written in due form for him that evening, and safely lodged in the post-office.

Miss Ophelia still persevered in her labours in the housekeeping line. It was universally agreed among all the household from Dinah down to the youngest urchin, that Miss Ophelia was decidedly "curis"—a term by which a southern servant implies that his or her betters don't exactly suit them.

The higher circle in the family—to wit, Adolph, Jane, and Rosa—agreed that she was no lady; ladies never kept working about as she did; that she had no *air* at all; and they were surprised that she should be any relation of the St. Clares. Even Marie declared that it was absolutely fatiguing to see Cousin Ophelia always so busy. And, in fact, Miss Ophelia's industry was so incessant as to lay some foundation for the complaint. She sewed and stitched

away, from daylight to dark, with the energy of one who is pressed on by some immediate urgency; and then, when the light faded, and the work was folded away, with one turn out came the ever-ready knitting-work, and there she was again, going on as briskly as ever. It really was a labour to see her.

CHAPTER XVIII

TOPSY

ONE morning, while Miss Ophelia was busy in some of her domestic cares, St. Clare's voice was heard calling her at the foot of the stairs.

"Come down here, cousin; I've something to show you."

"What is it?" said Miss Ophelia, coming down, with her sewing in her hand.

"I've made a purchase for your department—see here," said St. Clare; and, with the word, he pulled along a little negro girl, about eight or nine years of age.

She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round, shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the new mas'r's parlour, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction. The expression of the face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy ragged garment, made of bagging; and stood with her hands demurely folded before her. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like about her appearance—something, as Miss Ophelia afterwards said, "so heathenish," as to inspire that good lady with utter dismay; and, turning to St. Clare, she said:

"Augustine, what in the world have you brought that thing here for?"

"For you to educate, to be sure, and train in the way she

should go. I thought she was rather a funny specimen in the Jim Crow line. Here, Topsy," he added, giving a whistle, as a man would to call the attention of a dog, "give us a song, now, and show us some of your dancing."

The black, glassy eyes glittered with a kind of wicked drollery, and the thing struck up, in a clear shrill voice, an odd negro melody, to which she kept time with her hands and feet, spinning round, clapping her hands, knocking her knees together, in a wild, fantastic sort of time, and producing in her throat all those odd guttural sounds which distinguish the native music of her race; and finally, turning a somersault or two, and giving a prolonged closing note, as odd and unearthly as that of a steam-whistle, she came suddenly down on the carpet, and stood with her hands folded, and a most sanctimonious expression of meekness and solemnity over her face, only broken by the cunning glances which she shot askance from the corners of her eyes.

Miss Ophelia stood silent, perfectly paralysed with amazement.

St. Clare, like a mischievous fellow as he was, appeared to enjoy her astonishment; and, addressing the child again, said:

"Topsy, this is your new mistress. I'm going to give you up to her; see, now, that you behave yourself."

"Yes, mas'r," said Topsy, with a sanctimonious gravity, her wicked eyes twinkling as she spoke.

"You're going to be good, Topsy, you understand," said St. Clare.

"Oh, yes, mas'r," said Topsy, with another twinkle, her hands still devoutly folded.

"Now, Augustine, what upon earth is this for?" said Miss Ophelia. "Your house is so full of these little plagues now, that a body can't set her foot down without treading on 'em. I get up in the morning, and find one asleep behind the door, and see one black head poking out from under the table, one lying on the door-mat; and they are moping and mowing, and grinning between all the railings, and tumbling over the kitchen floor! What on earth did you want to bring this one for?"

"For you to educate—didn't I tell you? You're always

preaching about educating. I thought I would make you a present of a fresh-caught specimen, and let you try your hand on her, and bring her up in the way she should go."

"I don't want her, I'm sure; I have more to do with 'em now than I want to."

"That's you Christians all over! You'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathen. But let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labour of their conversion on yourselves! No; when it comes to that, they are dirty and disagreeable, and it's too much care, and so on."

"Augustine, you know I didn't think of it in that light," said Miss Ophelia, evidently softening. "Well, it might be a real missionary work," said she, looking rather more favourably on the child.

St. Clare had touched the right string. Miss Ophelia's conscientiousness was ever on the alert. "But," she added, "I really didn't see the need of buying this one—there are enough now in your house to take all my time and skill."

"Well, then, cousin," said St. Clare, drawing her aside, "I ought to beg your pardon for my good-for-nothing speeches. You are so good, after all, that there's no sense in them. Why, the fact is, this concern belonged to a couple of drunken creatures that keep a low restaurant that I have to pass by every day, and I was tired of hearing her screaming, and them beating and swearing at her. She looked bright and funny, too, as if something might be made of her; so I bought her, and I'll give her to you. Try, now, and give her a good orthodox New England bringing up, and see what it'll make of her. You know I haven't any gift that way, but I'd like you to try."

"Well, I'll do what I can," said Miss Ophelia; and she approached her new subject very much as a person might be supposed to approach a black spider, supposing him to have benevolent designs toward it.

"She's dreadfully dirty, and half naked," she said.

"Well, take her downstairs, and make some of them clean and clothe her up."

Miss Ophelia found that there was nobody in the camp that would undertake to oversee the cleansing and dressing

of the new arrival; and so she was forced to do it herself, with some very ungracious and reluctant assistance from Jane.

Miss Ophelia had a good, strong, practical deal of resolution; and she went through all the disgusting details with heroic thoroughness, though, it must be confessed, with no very gracious air. When she saw, on the back and shoulders of the child, great welts and calloused spots, ineffaceable marks of the system under which she had grown up thus far, her heart became pitiful within her.

When arrayed at last in a suit of decent and whole clothing, her hair cropped short to her head, Miss Ophelia, with some satisfaction, said she looked more Christian-like than she did, and in her own mind began to mature some plans for her instruction.

Sitting down before her, she began to question her.

"How old are you, Topsy?"

"Dun no, missis," said the image, with a grin that showed all her teeth.

"Don't know how old you are? Didn't anybody ever tell you? Who was your mother?"

"Never had none!" said the child, with another grin.

"Never had any mother? What do you mean? Where were you born?"

"Never was born!" persisted Topsy. "I was raised by a speculator, with lots of others. Old Aunt Sue used to take care on us."

The child was evidently sincere; and Jane, breaking into a short laugh, said:

"Laws, missis, there's heaps of 'em. Speculators buys 'em up cheap, when they's little, and gets 'em raised for market."

"Have you ever heard anything about God, Topsy?"

The child looked bewildered, but grinned as usual.

"Do you know who made you?"

"Nobody, as I knows on," said the child, with a short laugh.

The idea appeared to amuse her considerably; for her eyes twinkled, and she added:

"I spect I grow'd. Don't think nobody ever made me."

"Do you know how to sew?" said Miss Ophelia, who thought she would turn her inquiries to something more tangible.

"No, missis."

"What can you do?—what did you do for your master and mistress?"

"Fetch water, and wash dishes, and rub knives, and wait on folks."

"Were they good to you?"

"Spect they was," said the child, scanning Miss Ophelia cunningly.

Miss Ophelia rose from this encouraging colloquy; St. Clare was leaning over the back of her chair.

"You find virgin soil there, cousin; put in your own ideas—you won't find many to pull up."

Miss Ophelia's ideas of education could be expressed in a very few words: to teach children to mind when they were spoken to; to teach them the catechism, sewing, and reading; and to whip them if they told lies.

The child was announced and considered in the family as Miss Ophelia's girl; and, as she was looked upon with no gracious eye in the kitchen, Miss Ophelia resolved to confine her sphere of operation and instruction chiefly to her own chamber. With a self-sacrifice which some of our readers will appreciate, she resolved, instead of comfortably making her own bed, sweeping and dusting her own chamber—which she had hitherto done, in utter scorn of all offers of help from the chambermaid of the establishment—to condemn herself to the martyrdom of instructing Topsy to perform these operations.

Miss Ophelia began with Topsy by taking her into her chamber the first morning, and solemnly commenced a course of instruction in the art and mystery of bed-making.

Behold, then, Topsy, washed and shorn of all the little braided tails wherein her heart had delighted, arrayed in a clean gown, with well-starched apron, standing reverently before Miss Ophelia, with an expression of solemnity well befitting a funeral.

"Now, Topsy, I'm going to show you just how my bed is to be made. I am very particular about my bed. You must learn exactly how to do it."

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with a deep sigh, and a face of woeful earnestness.

"Now, Topsy, look here, this is the hem of the sheet—this is the right side of the sheet, and this is the wrong: will you remember?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, with another sigh.

"Well, now, the under-sheet you must bring over the bolster—so—and tuck it clear down under the mattress nice and smooth—so! Do you see?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, with profound attention.

"But the upper sheet," said Miss Ophelia, "must be brought down in this way, and tucked under firm and smooth at the foot—so—the narrow hem at the foot."

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, as before; but we will add, what Miss Ophelia did not see, that, during the time when the good lady's back was turned, in the zeal of her manipulations, the young disciple had contrived to snatch a pair of gloves and a ribbon, which she had adroitly slipped into her sleeves, and stood with her hands dutifully folded, as before.

"Now, Topsy, let's see *you* do this," said Miss Ophelia, pulling off the clothes, and seating herself.

Topsy, with great gravity and adroitness, went through the exercise completely to Miss Ophelia's satisfaction: smoothing the sheets, patting out every wrinkle, and exhibiting, through the whole process, a gravity and seriousness with which her instructress was greatly edified. By an unlucky slip, however, a fluttering fragment of the ribbon hung out of one of her sleeves, just as she was finishing, and caught Miss Ophelia's attention. Instantly she pounced upon it. "What's this? You naughty, wicked child—you've been stealing this!"

The ribbon was pulled out of Topsy's own sleeve, yet she was not in the least disconcerted; she only looked at it with an air of the most surprised and unconscious innocence.

"Laws! why, that ar's Miss Feely's ribbon, ain't it? How could it a got in my sleeve?"

"Topsy, you naughty girl, don't you tell me a lie! You stole that ribbon!"

"Missis, I declare for't, I didn't; never seed it till dis yer blessed minnit."

"Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "don't you know it's wicked to tell lies?"

"I never tells no lies, Miss Feely," said Topsy, with virtuous gravity; "it's jist the truth I've been a-tellin' now, and an't nothin' else."

"Topsy, I shall have to whip you, if you tell lies so."

"Laws, missis, if you's to whip all day, couldn't say no other way," said Topsy, beginning to blubber. "I never seed dat ar, it must a' got caught in my sleeve. Miss Feely must have left it on the bed, and it got caught in the clothes, and so got in my sleeve."

Miss Ophelia was so indignant at the barefaced lie that she caught the child and shook her.

"Don't you tell me that again!"

The shake brought the gloves on to the floor, from the other sleeve.

"There, you!" said Miss Ophelia, "will you tell me now you didn't steal the ribbon?"

Topsy now confessed to the gloves, but still persisted in denying the ribbon.

"Now, Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "if you'll confess all about it, I won't whip you this time." Thus adjured, Topsy confessed to the ribbon and gloves, with woeful protestations of penitence.

"Well, now, tell me. I know you must have taken other things since you have been in the house, for I let you run about all yesterday. Now, tell me if you took anything, and I shan't whip you."

"Laws, missis! I took Miss Eva's red thing she wars on her neck."

"You did, you naughty child! Well, what else?"

"I took Rosa's yer-rings—them red ones."

"Go bring them to me this minute, both of 'em."

"Laws, missis, I can't—they's burnt up!"

"Burnt up?—What a story! Go get 'em, or I'll whip you."

Topsy, with loud protestations, and tears, and groans, declared that she *could* not. "They's burnt up, they was."

"What did you burn 'em up for?" said Miss Ophelia.

"'Cause I's wicked, I is. I's mighty wicked, anyhow. I can't help it."

Just at that moment Eva came innocently into the room, with the identical coral necklace on her neck.

"Why, Eva, where did you get your necklace?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Get it? Why, I've had it on all day," said Eva.

"Did you have it on yesterday?"

"Yes; and, what is funny, aunty, I had it on all night. I forgot to take it off when I went to bed."

Miss Ophelia looked perfectly bewildered; the more so as Rosa at that instant came into the room with a basket of new-ironed linen poised on her head, and the coral ear-drops shaking in her ears.

"I'm sure I can't tell anything what to do with such a child!" she said, in despair. "What in the world did you tell me you took those things for, Topsy?"

"Why, missis said I must 'fess; and I couldn't think of nothin' else to 'fess," said Topsy, rubbing her eyes.

"But of course, I didn't want you to confess things you didn't do," said Miss Ophelia; "that's telling a lie, just as much as the other."

"Laws now, is it?" said Topsy, with an air of innocent wonder.

What was to be done with Topsy? Miss Ophelia found the case a puzzler; her rules for bringing up didn't seem to apply. She thought she would take time to think of it; and by the way of gaining time, and in hopes of some indefinite moral virtues supposed to be inherent in dark closets, Miss Ophelia shut Topsy up in one till she had arranged her ideas further on the subject.

"I don't see," said Miss Ophelia to St. Clare, "how I'm going to manage that child without whipping her."

"Well, whip her, then, to your heart's content; I'll give you full power to do what you like."

"Children always have to be whipped," said Miss Ophelia; "I never heard of bringing them up without."

"Oh, well, certainly," said St. Clare; "do as you think best. Only I'll make one suggestion: I've seen this child whipped with a poker, knocked down with the shovel or tongs, whichever came handiest; and seeing that she is used to that style of operation, I think your whippings will have to be pretty energetic to make much impression."

"What is to be done with her, then?" said Ophelia.

"You have started a serious question," said St. Clare; "I wish you'd answer it. What is to be done with a human being that can be governed only by the lash?—*that* fails—it's a very common state of things down here."

"I'm sure I don't know; I never saw such a child as this."

"Such children are very common among us, and such men and women too. How are they to be governed?" said St. Clare.

"I'm sure it's more than I can say," said Miss Ophelia.

"Or I either," said St. Clare. "You have talked a great deal about your responsibilities in educating, cousin. I really wanted you to *try* with one child, who is a specimen of thousands among us."

"It is your system makes such children," said Miss Ophelia.

"I know it; but they are *made*—they exist—and what *is* to be done with them?"

"Well, I can't say I thank you for the experiment. But then, as it appears to be a duty, I shall persevere, and try, and do the best I can," said Miss Ophelia; and Miss Ophelia, after this, did labour with a commendable degree of zeal and energy on her new subject. She instituted regular hours and employments for her, and undertook to teach her to read and to sew.

In the former art the child was quick enough. She learned her letters as if by magic, and was very soon able to read plain reading; but the sewing was a more difficult matter. The creature was as lithe as a cat, and as active as a monkey, and the confinement of sewing was her abomination; so she broke her needles, threw them slily out of the windows, or down in chinks of the walls; she tangled, broke, or dirtied her thread, or, with a sly movement, would throw away a spool altogether. Her motions were almost as quick as those of a practised conjurer, and her command of her face quite as great; and though Miss Ophelia could not help feeling that so many accidents could not possibly happen in succession, yet she could not, without a watchfulness which would leave her no time for anything else, detect her.

Topsy was soon a noted character in the establishment.

Her talent for every species of drollery, grimace, and mimicry—for dancing, tumbling, climbing, singing, whistling, imitating every sound that hit her fancy—seemed inexhaustible. In her play-hours she invariably had every child in the establishment at her heels, open-mouthed with admiration and wonder—not excepting Miss Eva, who appeared to be fascinated by her wild diablerie, as a dove is sometimes charmed by a glittering serpent. Miss Ophelia was uneasy that Eva should fancy Topsy's society so much, and implored St. Clare to forbid it.

"Poh! let the child alone," said St. Clare. "Topsy will do her good."

"But so depraved a child—are you not afraid she will teach her some mischief?"

"She can't teach her mischief; she might teach it to some children, but evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage-leaf—not a drop sinks in."

"Don't be too sure," said Miss Ophelia. "I know I'd never let a child of mine play with Topsy."

"Well, your children needn't," said St. Clare, "but mine may; if Eva could have been spoiled, it would have been done years ago."

Topsy was at first despised and contemned by the upper servants; they soon found reason to alter their opinion. It was very soon discovered that whoever cast an indignity on Topsy was sure to meet with some inconvenient accident shortly after—either a pair of ear-rings or some cherished trinket would be missing, or an article of dress would be suddenly found utterly ruined, or the person would stumble accidentally into a pail of hot water, or a libation of dirty slop would unaccountably deluge them from above when in full gala-dress; and on all these occasions, when investigation was made, there was nobody found to stand sponsor for the indignity. Topsy was cited, and had up before all the domestic judicatories, time and again; but always sustained her examinations with most edifying innocence and gravity of appearance. Nobody in the world ever doubted who did the things; but not a scrap of direct evidence could be found to establish the suppositions, and Miss Ophelia was too just to feel at liberty to proceed to any lengths without it.

The mischiefs done were always so nicely timed, also, as further to shelter the aggressor. Thus, the times for revenge on Rosa and Jane, the two chambermaids, were always chosen in those seasons when (as not unfrequently happens) they were in disgrace with their mistress, when any complaint from them would of course meet with no sympathy. In short, Topsy soon made the household understand the propriety of letting her alone; she was let alone accordingly.

Topsy was smart and energetic in all manual operations, learning everything that was taught her with surprising quickness. With a few lessons she had learned the proprieties of Miss Ophelia's chamber in a way with which even that particular lady could find no fault. Mortal hands could not lay a spread smoother, adjust pillows more accurately, sweep and dust and arrange more perfectly than Topsy, when she chose—but she didn't very often choose. If Miss Ophelia, after three or four days of careful and patient supervision, was so sanguine as to suppose that Topsy had at last fallen into her way, could do without overlooking, and so go off and busy herself about something else, Topsy would hold a perfect carnival of confusion for some one or two hours. Instead of making the bed, she would amuse herself with pulling off the pillow-cases, butting her woolly head among the pillows, till it would sometimes be grotesquely ornamented with feathers sticking out in various directions; she would climb the posts, and hang head downward from the tops; flourish the sheets and spreads all over the apartment; dress the bolster up in Miss Ophelia's night-clothes, and enact various scenic performances with that—singing and whistling, and making grimaces at herself in the looking-glass; in short, as Miss Ophelia phrased it, "raising Cain" generally.

On one occasion, Miss Ophelia found Topsy with her very best scarlet India Canton crape shawl wound round her head for a turban, going on with her rehearsals before the glass in great style—Miss Ophelia having, with carelessness most unheard-of in her, left the key for once in her drawer.

"Topsy!" she would say, when at the end of all patience, "what does make you act so?"

"Dunno, missis—I spects cause I's so wicked!"

"I don't know what I shall do with you, Topsy."

"Laws, missis, you must whip me; my old missis allers whipped me. I an't used to workin' unless I gets whipped."

"Why, Tipsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well, if you've a mind to; what is the reason you won't?"

"Laws, missis, I's used to whippin'; I spects it's good for me."

Miss Ophelia tried the recipe, and Topsy invariably made a terrible commotion, screaming, groaning, and imploring; though half an hour afterwards, when roosted on some projection of the balcony, and surrounded by a flock of "young uns," she would express the utmost contempt of the whole affair.

"Law, Miss Feely whip!—wouldn't kill a skeeter, her whippin's. Oughter see how old mas'r made the flesh fly; old mas'r know'd how!"

Topsy always made great capital of her own sins and enormities, evidently considering them as something peculiarly distinguishing.

"Law, you niggers," she would say to some of her auditors, "does you know you's all sinners? Well, you is, everybody is. White folks is sinners too—Miss Feely says so; but I spects niggers is the biggest ones; but Lor! ye an't any on ye up to me. I's so awful wicked, there can't nobody do nothin' with me. I used to keep old missis a-swarin' at me half de time. I spects I's the wickedest critter in the world"; and Topsy would cut a somersault, and come up brisk and shining on to a higher perch, and evidently plume herself on the distinction.

Miss Ophelia busied herself very earnestly on Sundays, teaching Topsy the catechism. Topsy had an uncommon verbal memory, and committed with a fluency that greatly encouraged her instructress.

"What good do you expect it is going to do her?" said St. Clare.

"Why, it always has done children good. It's what children always have to learn, you know," said Miss Ophelia.

"Understand it or not?" said St. Clare.

"Oh, children never understand it at the time; but after they are grown up it'll come to them."

"Mine hasn't come to me yet," said St. Clare, "though

I'll bear testimony that you put it into me pretty thoroughly when I was a boy."

"Ah, you were always good at learning, Augustine. I used to have great hopes of you," said Miss Ophelia.

"Well, haven't you now?" said St. Clare.

"I wish you were as good as you were when you were a boy, Augustine."

"So do I, that's a fact, cousin," said St. Clare. "Well, go ahead and catechise Topsy; maybe you'll make out something yet."

Topsy, who had stood like a black statue during this discussion, with hands decently folded, now, at a signal from Miss Ophelia, went on:

"Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created."

Topsy's eyes twinkled, and she looked inquiringly.

"What is it, Topsy?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Please, missis, was dat ar state Kintuck?"

"What state, Topsy?"

"Dat state dey fell out of. I used to hear mas'r tell how we came down from Kintuck."

In very much this way Topsy's training proceeded, for a year or two—Miss Ophelia worrying herself from day to day with her, as a kind of chronic plague, to whose inflictions she became, in time, as accustomed as persons sometimes do to the neuralgia or sick-headache.

St. Clare took the same kind of amusement in the child that a man might in the tricks of a parrot or a pointer. Topsy, whenever her sins brought her into disgrace in other quarters, always took refuge behind his chair; and St. Clair, in one way or other, would make peace for her. From him she got many a stray picayune, which she laid out in nuts and candies, and distributed, with careless generosity, to all the children in the family; for Topsy, to do her justice, was good-natured and liberal, and only spiteful in self-defence. She is fairly introduced into our *corps de ballet*, and will figure, from time to time, in her turn, with other performers.

CHAPTER XIX

"THE GRASS WITHERETH—THE FLOWER FADETH"

LIFE passes, with us all, a day at a time; so it passed with our friend Tom, till two years were gone. Though parted from all his soul held dear, and though often yearning for what lay beyond, still was he never positively and consciously miserable.

At this time in our story, the whole St. Clare establishment is, for the time being, removed to their villa on Lake Pontchartrain. The heats of summer had driven all who were able to leave the sultry and unhealthy city, to seek the shores of the lake, and its cool sea-breezes.

St. Clare's villa was an East Indian cottage, surrounded by light verandahs of bamboo-work, and opening on all sides into gardens and pleasure-grounds. The common sitting-room opened on to a large garden, fragrant with every picturesque plant and flower of the tropics, where winding paths ran down to the very shores of the lake, whose silvery sheet of water lay there, rising and falling in the sunbeams—a picture never for an hour the same, yet every hour more beautiful.

It is now one of those intensely golden sunsets which kindle the whole horizon into one blaze of glory, and make the water another sky. The lake lay in rosy or golden streaks, save where white-winged vessels glided hither and thither, like so many spirits, and little golden stars twinkled through the glow, and looked down at themselves as they trembled in the water.

Tom and Eva were seated on a little mossy seat, in an arbour, at the foot of the garden. It was Sunday evening, and Eva's Bible lay open upon her knee. She read, "And I saw a sea of glass, mingled with fire."

"Tom," said Eva, suddenly stopping, and pointing to the lake, "there 'tis."

"What, Miss Eva?"

"Don't you see?—there!" said the child, pointing to the glassy water, which, as it rose and fell, reflected the

golden glow of the sky. "There's a 'sea of glass mingled with fire.'"

"True enough, Miss Eva," said Tom: and Tom sang:

> Oh, had I the wings of the morning,
> I'd fly away to Canaan's shore;
> Bright angels should convey me home,
> To the new Jerusalem.

"Where do you suppose New Jerusalem is, Uncle Tom?" said Eva.

"Oh, up in the clouds, Miss Eva."

"Then I think I see it," said Eva. "Look in those clouds! They look like great gates of pearl; and you can see beyond them—far, far off——it's all gold! Uncle Tom, I'm going there."

"Where, Miss Eva?"

The child rose, and pointed her little hand to the sky; the glow of evening lit her golden hair and flushed cheek with a kind of unearthly radiance, and her eyes were bent earnestly on the skies.

"I'm going *there*," she said, "to the spirits bright, Tom; *I'm going, before long.*"

The faithful old heart felt a sudden thrust; and Tom thought how often he had noticed, within six months, that Eva's little hands had grown thinner, and her skin more transparent, and her breath shorter; and how, when she ran or played in the garden, as she once could for hours, she became soon so tired and languid. He had heard Miss Ophelia speak often of a cough that all her medicaments could not cure; and even now that fervent cheek and little hand were burning with hectic fever; and yet the thought that Eva's words suggested had never come to him till now.

The colloquy between Tom and Eva was interrupted by a hasty call from Miss Ophelia.

"Eva—Eva!—why, child, the dew is falling; you mustn't be out there!"

Eva and Tom hastened in.

Miss Ophelia was old, and skilled in the tactics of nursing. She was from New England, and knew well the first guileful footsteps of that soft, insidious disease which sweeps away so many of the fairest and loveliest, and, before one fibre of life seems broken, seals them irrevocably for death.

She had noted the slight, dry cough, the daily brightening cheek; nor could the lustre of the eye and the airy buoyancy born of fever deceive her.

She tried to communicate her fears to St. Clare; but he threw back her suggestions with a restless petulance, unlike his usual careless good-humour.

"Don't be croaking, cousin—I hate it!" he would say, "don't you see that the child is only growing? Children always lose strength when they grow fast."

"But she has that cough!"

"Oh, nonsense—it is not anything! She has taken a little cold, perhaps."

"Well, that was just the way Eliza Jane was taken, and Ellen and Maria Sanders."

"Oh, stop these hobgoblin nurse-legends! You old hands get so wise, that a child cannot cough or sneeze but you see desperation and ruin at hand. Only take care of the child, keep her from the night air, and don't let her play too hard, and she'll do well enough."

So St. Clair said; but he grew nervous and restless. He watched Eva feverishly day by day, as might be told by the frequency with which he repeated over that "the child was quite well"—that there wasn't anything in that cough—it was only some little stomach affection, such as children often had. But he kept by her more than before, took her oftener to ride with him, brought home every few days some recipe or strengthening mixture—"not," he said, "that the child *needed* it, but that it would not do her any harm."

CHAPTER XX

FORESHADOWINGS

SHORTLY after this, Eva began to fail rapidly. St. Clare was at last willing to call in medical advice, a thing from which he had always shrunk, because it was the admission of an unwelcome truth. But for a day or two Eva was so unwell as to be confined to the house, and the doctor was called.

Marie St. Clare had taken no notice of the child's gradually decaying health and strength, because she was completely absorbed in studying out two or three new forms of disease to which she believed she herself was a victim. It was the first principle of Marie's belief that nobody ever was or could be so great a sufferer as *herself;* and therefore she always repelled quite indignantly any suggestion that any one around her could be sick. She was always sure in such a case that it was nothing but laziness or want of energy; and that, if they had had the suffering *she* had, they would soon know the difference.

But now that Eva was fairly and visibly prostrated, and a doctor called, Marie all on a sudden took a new turn.

She knew it, she said, she always felt it, that she was destined to be the most miserable of mothers. Here she was, with her wretched health, and her only darling child going down to the grave before her eyes! And Marie routed up Mammy at nights, and rumpussed and scolded with more energy than ever all day, on the strength of this new misery.

"My dear Marie, don't talk so!" said St. Clare. "You ought not to give up the case so at once."

"You have not a mother's feelings, St. Clare. You never could understand me—you don't now."

"But don't talk so, as if it were a gone case!"

"I can't take it as indifferently as you can, St. Clare. If *you* don't feel when your only child is in this alarming state, *I* do. It's a blow too much for me, with all I was bearing before."

"It's true," said St. Clare, "that Eva is very delicate, *that* I always knew; and that she has grown so rapidly as to exhaust her strength; and that her situation is critical. But just now she is only prostrated by the heat of the weather, and by the excitement of her cousin's visit, and the exertions she made. The physician says there is room for hope."

"Well, of course, if you can look on the bright side, pray do; it's a mercy if people haven't sensitive feelings in this world. I am sure I wish I didn't feel as I do; it only makes me completely wretched! I wish I *could* be as easy as the rest of you!"

And the "rest of them" had good reason to breathe the

same prayer, for Marie paraded her new misery as the reason and apology for all sorts of inflictions on every one about her. Every word that was spoken by anybody, everything that was done or not done everywhere, was only a new proof that she was surrounded by hard-hearted, insensible beings, who were unmindful of her peculiar sorrows. Poor Eva heard some of those speeches; and nearly cried her little eyes out in pity for her mamma, and in sorrow that she should make her so much distress.

In a week or two there was a great improvement of symptoms—one of those deceitful lulls by which her inexorable disease so often beguiles the anxious heart, even on the verge of the grave. Eva's step was again in the garden—in the balconies; she played and laughed again, and her father, in a transport, declared that they should soon have her as hearty as anybody. Miss Ophelia and the physician alone felt no encouragement from this illusive truce. There was one other heart, too, that felt the same certainty, and that was the little heart of Eva. What is it that sometimes speaks in the soul so calmly, so clearly, that its earthly time is short? Is it the secret instinct of decaying nature, or the soul's impulsive throb, as immortality draws on? Be it what it may, it rested in the heart of Eva, a calm, sweet, prophetic certainty that heaven was near; calm as the light of sunset, sweet as the bright stillness of autumn, there her little heart reposed, only troubled by sorrow for those who loved her so dearly.

For the child, though nursed so tenderly, and though life was unfolding before her with every brightness that love and wealth could give, had no regret for herself in dying.

But her heart yearned with sad tenderness for all that she was to leave behind—her father most; for Eva, though she never distinctly thought so, had an instinctive perception that she was more in his heart than any other. She loved her mother because she was so loving a creature, and all the selfishness that she had seen in her only saddened and perplexed her; for she had a child's implicit trust that her mother could not do wrong.

She felt, too, for those fond, faithful servants, to whom she was as daylight and sunshine. Children do not usually generalise; but Eva was an uncommonly mature child,

and the things that she had witnessed of the evils of the system under which they were living had fallen, one by one, into the depths of her thoughtful, pondering heart. She had vague longings to do something for them—to bless and save not only them, but all in their condition—longings that contrasted sadly with the feebleness of her little frame.

"Uncle Tom," she said one day, when she was reading to her friend, "I can understand why Jesus *wanted* to die for us."

"Why, Miss Eva?"

"Because I've felt so too."

"What is it, Miss Eva? I don't understand."

"I can't tell you; but when I saw those poor creatures on the boat, you know, when you came up and I, some had lost their mothers, and some their husbands, and some mothers cried for their little children;—and a great many other times, I've felt that I would be glad to die if my dying could stop all this misery. I *would die* for them, Tom, if I could," said the child earnestly, laying her little thin hand on his.

Tom looked at the child with awe; and when she, hearing her father's voice, glided away, he wiped his eyes many times as he looked after her.

"It's just no use tryin' to keep Miss Eva here," he said to Mammy, whom he met a moment after. "She's got the Lord's mark in her forehead."

"Ah, yes, yes," said Mammy, raising her hands, "I've allers said so. She wasn't ever like a child that's to live—there was allurs something deep in her eyes. I've told missis so many the time; it's a-comin' true—we all sees it—dear, little, blessed lamb!"

Eva came tripping up the verandah steps to her father. It was late in the afternoon, and the rays of the sun formed a kind of glory behind her, as she came forward in her white dress, with her golden hair and glowing cheeks, her eyes unnaturally bright with the slow fever that burned in her veins.

St. Clare had called her to show a statuette that he had been buying for her; but her appearance, as she came on, impressed him suddenly and painfully. There is a kind of beauty so intense, yet so fragile, that we cannot bear to

look at it. Her father folded her suddenly in his arms, and almost forgot what he was going to tell her.

"Eva, dear, you are better nowadays, are you not?"

"Papa," said Eva, with sudden firmness, "I've had things I wanted to say to you a great while. I want to say them now, before I get weaker."

St. Clare trembled as Eva seated herself in his lap. She laid her head on his bosom, and said:

"It's all no use, papa, to keep it to myself any longer. The time is coming that I am going to leave you. I am going, and never to come back!" and Eva sobbed.

"Oh, now, my dear little Eva!" said St. Clare, trembling as he spoke, but speaking cheerfully, "you've got nervous and low-spirited; you mustn't indulge such gloomy thoughts. See here, I've bought a statuette for you!"

"No, papa," said Eva, putting it gently away, "don't deceive yourself! I am *not* any better—I know it perfectly well; and I am going before long. I am not nervous—I am not low-spirited. If it were not for you, papa, and my friends, I should be perfectly happy. I want to go—I long to go!"

"Why, dear child, what has made your poor little heart so sad? You have had everything to make you happy that could be given you!"

"I had rather be in heaven, though—only for my friends' sake I would be willing to live. There are a great many things here that make me sad, that seem dreadful to me. I had rather be there; but I don't want to leave you—it almost breaks my heart!"

"What makes you sad, and seems dreadful, Eva?"

"Oh, things that are done, and done all the time. I feel sad for our poor people; they love me dearly, and they are all good and kind to me. I wish, papa, they were all *free*."

"Why, Eva, child, don't you think they're well enough off now?"

"Oh, but papa, if anything should happen to you, what would become of them? There are very few men like you, papa. Uncle Alfred isn't like you, and mamma isn't. What horrid things people do, and can do!" and Eva shuddered.

"My dear child, you are too sensitive. I'm sorry I ever let you hear such stories."

"Oh, that's what troubles me, papa! You want me to live so happy, and never to have any pain, never suffer anything, not even hear a sad story, when other poor creatures have nothing but pain and sorrow all their lives; it seems selfish. I ought to know such things—I ought to feel about them. Such things always sunk into my heart—they went down deep; I've thought and thought about them. Papa, isn't there any way to have all slaves made free?"

"That's a difficult question, dearest. There's no doubt that this way is a very bad one, a great many people think so; I do myself. I heartily wish that there was not a slave in the land; but then I don't know what is to be done about it."

"Papa, you are such a good man, and so noble, and kind, and you always have a way of saying things that is so pleasant; couldn't you go all round and try to persuade people to do right about this? When I am dead, papa then you will think of me, and do it for my sake. I would do it if I could."

"When you are dead, Eva!" said St. Clare passionately. "Oh, child, don't talk to me so! You are all I have on earth."

"Papa, these poor creatures love their children as much as you do me. Oh, do something for them! There's poor Mammy loves her children; I've seen her cry when she talked about them. And Tom loves his children; and it's dreadful, papa, that such things are happening all the time!"

"There, there, darling," said St. Clare soothingly; "only don't distress yourself, and don't talk of dying, and I will do anything you wish."

"And promise me, dear father, that Tom shall have his freedom as soon as——" She stopped, and said in a hesitating tone: "I am gone!"

"Yes, dear, I will do anything in the world—anything you could ask me to."

"Dear papa," said the child, laying her burning cheek against his, "how I wish we could go together!"

"Where, dearest?" said St. Clare.

"To our Saviour's home; it's so sweet and peaceful

there—it is all so loving there!" The child spoke unconsciously, as of a place where she had often been. "Don't you want to go, papa?" she said.

St. Clare drew her closer to him, but was silent.

"You will come to me?" said the child, speaking in a voice of calm certainty, which she often used unconsciously.

"I shall come after you. I shall not forget you."

The shadows of the solemn evening closed round them deeper and deeper, as St. Clare sat silently holding the little frail form to his bosom. He saw no more the deep eyes, but the voice came over him as a spirit voice; and, as in a sort of judgment vision, his whole past life rose in a moment before his eyes—his mother's prayers and hymns—his own early yearnings and aspirings for good; and, between them and this hour, years of worldliness and scepticism, and what man calls respectable living. We can think *much*, very much, in a moment. St. Clare saw and felt many things, but spoke nothing; and, as it grew darker, he took his child to her bedroom; and, when she was prepared for rest, he sent away the attendants, and rocked her in his arms, and sang to her till she was asleep.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LITTLE EVANGELIST

It was Sunday afternoon. St. Clare was stretched on a bamboo lounge in the verandah, solacing himself with a cigar. Marie lay reclined on a sofa, opposite the window opening on the verandah, closely secluded, under an awning of transparent gauze, from the outrages of the mosquitoes, and languidly holding in her hand an elegantly-bound prayer-book. She was holding it because it was Sunday, and she imagined she had been reading it—though, in fact, she had been only taking a succession of short naps, with it open in her hand.

Miss Ophelia, who, after some rummaging, had hunted up a small Methodist meeting within riding distance, had gone out, with Tom as driver, to attend it, and Eva had accompanied them.

St. Clare went on smoking, till a carriage drove up before the verandah, and Eva and Miss Ophelia alighted.

Miss Ophelia marched straight to her own chamber, to put away her bonnet and shawl, as was always her manner, before she spoke a word on any subject; while Eva came, at St. Clare's call, and was sitting on his knee, giving him an account of the services they had heard.

They soon heard loud exclamations from Miss Ophelia's room (which, like the one in which they were sitting, opened to the verandah), and violent reproof addressed to somebody.

"What new witchcraft has Tops been brewing?" asked St. Clair. "That commotion is of her raising, I'll be bound."

And in a moment after, Miss Ophelia, in high indignation, came dragging the culprit along.

"Come out here, now!" she said. "I *will* tell your master!"

"What's the case now?" asked Augustine.

"The case is, that I cannot be plagued with this child any longer! It's past all bearing; flesh and blood cannot endure it! Here, I locked her up, and gave her a hymn to study; and what does she do, but spy out where I put my key, and has gone to my bureau, and got a bonnet-trimming, and cut it all to pieces to make dolls' jackets! I never saw anything like it in my life."

"I told you, cousin," said Marie, "that you'd find out that these creatures can't be brought up without severity. If I had *my* way, now," she said, looking reproachfully at St. Clare, "I'd send that child out, and have her thoroughly whipped; I'd have her whipped till she couldn't stand!"

"I don't doubt it," said St. Clare. "Tell me of the lovely rule of woman! I never saw above a dozen women that wouldn't half kill a horse, or a servant, either, if they had their own way with them, let alone a man."

"There is no use in this shilly-shally way of yours, St. Clare!" said Marie. "Cousin is a woman of sense, and she sees it now as plain as I do."

Miss Ophelia had just the capability of indignation that belongs to the thorough-paced housekeeper, and this had been pretty actively roused by the artifice and wastefulness of the child; in fact, many of my lady readers must own

that they would have felt just so in her circumstances; but Marie's words went beyond her, and she felt less heat.

"I wouldn't have the child treated so for the world," she said; "but I am sure, Augustine, I don't know what to do. I've taught and taught, I've talked till I'm tired, I've whipped her, I've punished her in every way I can think of; and still she's just what she was at first."

"Come here, Tops, you monkey!" said St. Clare, calling the child up to him.

Topsy came up; her round, hard eyes glittering and blinking with a mixture of apprehensiveness and their usual odd drollery.

"What makes you behave so?" said St. Clare, who could not help being amused with the child's expression.

"Spects it's my wicked heart," said Topsy demurely; "Miss Feely says so."

"Don't you see how much Miss Ophelia has done for you? She says she has done everything she can think of."

"Lor, yes, mas'r! Old missis used to say so, too. She whipped me a heap harder, and used to pull my har, and knock my head agin the door; but it didn't do me no good! I spects, if they's to pull every spear o' har out o' my head it wouldn't do no good neither. I's so wicked! Laws! I's nothin' but a nigger, no ways!"

"Well, I shall have to give her up," said Miss Ophelia; "I can't have that trouble any longer."

Eva, who had stood a silent spectator of the scene thus far, made a silent sign to Topsy to follow her. There was a little glass-room at the corner of the verandah, which St. Clare used as a sort of reading-room; and Eva and Topsy disappeared into this place.

"What's Eva going about, now?" said St. Clare; "I mean to see."

And, advancing on tiptoe, he lifted up a curtain that covered the glass door, and looked in. In a moment, laying his fingers to his lips, he made silent gesture to Miss Ophelia to come and look. There sat the two children on the floor, with their side faces towards them—Topsy with her usual air of careless drollery and unconcern; but, opposite to her, Eva, her whole face fervent with feeling, and tears in her large eyes.

"What does make you so bad, Topsy? Why won't you try and be good? Don't you love *anybody*, Topsy?"

"Dunno nothing 'bout loves! I loves candy and sich, that's all," said Topsy.

"But you love your father and mother?"

"Never had none, ye know. I telled ye that, Miss Eva."

"Oh, I know," said Eva sadly; "but hadn't you any brother, or sister, or aunt, or——"

"No, none on 'em—never had nothing nor nobody."

"But, Topsy, if you'd only try to be good, you might——"

"Couldn't never be nothin' but a nigger, if I was ever so good," said Topsy. "If I could be skinned, and come white, I'd try then."

"But people can love you, if you are black, Topsy. Miss Ophelia would love you if you were good."

Topsy gave the short, blunt laugh that was her common mode of expressing incredulity.

"Don't you think so?" said Eva.

"No; she can't bar me, 'cause I'm a nigger!—she'd 's soon have a toad touch her. There can't nobody love niggers, and niggers can't do nothin'. *I* don't care," said Topsy, beginning to whistle.

"O Topsy, poor child, *I* love you!" said Eva, with a sudden burst of feeling, and laying her little thin, white hand on Topsy's shoulder. "I love you, because you haven't had any father, or mother, or friends—because you've been a poor, abused child! I love you, and I want you to be good. I am very unwell, Topsy, and I think I shan't live a great while; and it really grieves me to have you be so naughty. I wish you would try to be good, for my sake; it's only a little while I shall be with you."

The round, keen eyes of the black child were overcast with tears; large, bright drops rolled heavily down, one by one, and fell on the little white hand. Yes, in that moment a ray of real belief, a ray of heavenly hope, had penetrated the darkness of her heathen soul! She laid her head down between her knees, and wept, and sobbed; while the beautiful child, bending over her, looked like the picture of some bright angel stooping to reclaim a sinner.

"Poor Topsy!" said Eva; "don't you know that Jesus loves all alike? He is just as willing to love you as me. He

loves you just as I do, only more, because He is better. He will help you to be good, and you can go to heaven at last, and be an angel for ever, just as much as if you were white. Only think of it, Topsy; *you* can be one of those spirits bright Uncle Tom sings about."

"O dear Miss Eva! dear Miss Eva!" said the child, "I will try! I will try! I never did care nothin' about it before."

St. Clare at this instant dropped the curtain. "It puts me in mind of mother," he said to Miss Ophelia. "It is true what she told me: if we want to give sight to the blind we must be willing to do as Christ did—call them to us, and *put our hands on them.*"

"I've always had a prejudice against negroes," said Miss Ophelia; "and it's a fact, I never could bear to have that child touch me; but I didn't think she knew it."

"Trust any child to find that out," said St. Clare; "there's no keeping it from them. But I believe that all the trying in the world to benefit a child, and all the substantial favours you can do them, will never excite one emotion of gratitude while that feeling of repugnance remains in the heart; it's a queer kind of fact, but so it is."

"I don't know how I can help it," said Miss Ophelia; "they *are* disagreeable to me—this child in particular. How can I help feeling so?"

"Eva does, it seems."

"Well, she's so loving! After all, though, she's no more than Christ-like," said Miss Ophelia; "I wish I were like her. She might teach me a lesson."

"It wouldn't be the first time a little child had been used to instruct an old disciple, if it *were* so," said St. Clare.

CHAPTER XXII

DEATH

EVA's bedroom was a spacious apartment, which, like all the other rooms in the house, opened on to the broad verandah. The room communicated, on one side, with her father and mother's apartment; on the other, with that

appropriated to Miss Ophelia. St. Clare had gratified his own eye and taste in furnishing this room in a style that had a peculiar keeping with the character of her for whom it was intended. There was a fireplace in the room; and on the marble mantel above stood a beautifully wrought statuette of Jesus receiving little children, and on either side marble vases, for which it was Tom's pride and delight to offer bouquets every morning. Two or three exquisite paintings of children, in various attitudes, embellished the wall. In short, the eye could turn nowhere without meeting images of childhood, of beauty, and of peace. Those little eyes never opened, in the morning light, without falling on something which suggested to the heart soothing and beautiful thoughts.

The deceitful strength which had buoyed Eva up for a little while was fast passing away; seldom and more seldom her light footstep was heard in the verandah, and oftener and oftener she was found reclined on a little lounge by the open window, her large, deep eyes fixed on the rising and falling waters of the lake.

It was towards the middle of the afternoon, as she was so reclining—her Bible half open, her little transparent fingers lying listlessly between the leaves—suddenly she heard her mother's voice, in sharp tones, in the verandah.

"What now, you baggage! what new piece of mischief? You've been picking the flowers, eh?" and Eva heard the sound of a smart slap.

"Law, missis! they's for Miss Eva," she heard a voice say, which she knew belonged to Topsy.

"Miss Eva! A pretty excuse! you suppose she wants *your* flowers, you good-for-nothing nigger! Get along off with you!"

In a moment Eva was off from her lounge and in the verandah.

"Oh, don't, mother! I should like the flowers; do give them to me; I want them."

"Why, Eva, your room is full now," said Marie.

"I can't have too many," said Eva. "Topsy, do bring them here."

Topsy, who had stood sullenly, holding down her head, now came up and offered her flowers. She did it with a look

of hesitation and bashfulness, quite unlike the eldritch boldness and brightness which was usual with her.

"It's a beautiful bouquet!" said Eva, looking at it.

It was rather a singular one—a brilliant scarlet geranium, and one single white japonica, with its glossy leaves. It was tied up with an evident eye to the contrast of colour, and the arrangement of every leaf had been carefully studied.

Topsy looked pleased as Eva said: "Topsy, you arrange flowers very prettily. Here," she said, "in this case I haven't any flowers. I wish you'd arrange something every day for it."

"Well, that's odd!" said Marie. "What in the world do you want that for?"

"Never mind, mamma; you'd as lief as not Topsy should do it—had you not?"

"Of course, anything you please, dear! Topsy, you hear your young mistress; see that you mind."

Topsy made a short curtsy and looked down; and, as she turned away, Eva saw a tear roll down her dark cheek.

"You see, mamma, I knew poor Topsy wanted to do something for me," said Eva to her mother.

"Oh, nonsense! It's only because she likes to do mischief. She knows she mustn't pick flowers, so she does it; that's all there is to it. But if you fancy to have her pluck them, so be it."

"Mamma, I think Topsy is different from what she used to be; she's trying to be a good girl."

"She'll have to try a good while before *she* gets to be good," said Marie, with a careless laugh.

"Mamma, you believe, don't you, that Topsy could become an angel, as well as any of us, if she were a Christian?"

"Topsy! What a ridiculous idea! Nobody but you would ever think of it. I suppose she could, though."

"But, mamma, isn't God her Father, as much as ours? Isn't Jesus her Saviour?"

"Well, that may be. I suppose God made everybody," said Marie. "Where is my smelling-bottle?"

"Mamma," said Eva, "I want to have some of my hair cut off—a good deal of it."

"What for?" said Marie.

"Mamma, I want to give some away to my friends, while I am able to give it to them myself. Won't you ask aunty to come and cut it for me?"

Marie raised her voice, and called Miss Ophelia from the other room.

The child half rose from her pillow as she came in, and shaking down her long golden-brown curls, said, rather playfully, "Come, aunty, shear the sheep!"

"What's that?" said St. Clare, who had just then entered with some fruit he had been out to get for her.

"Papa, I just want aunty to cut off some of my hair; there's too much of it, and it makes my head hot. Besides, I want to give some of it away."

Miss Ophelia came with her scissors.

"Take care, don't spoil the looks of it," said her father; "cut underneath, where it won't show. Eva's curls are my pride."

"Oh, papa!" said Eva sadly.

She beckoned with her hand to her father. He came, and sat down by her.

"Papa, my strength fades away every day, and I know I must go. There are some things I want to say and do, that I ought to do; and you are so unwilling to have me speak a word on this subject. But it must come; there's no putting it off. Do be willing I should speak now."

"My child, I *am* willing," said St. Clare, covering his eyes with one hand, and holding up Eva's hand with the other.

"Then I want to see all our people together. I have some things I *must* say to them," said Eva.

"*Well!*" said St. Clare, in a tone of dry endurance.

Miss Ophelia dispatched a messenger, and soon the whole of the servants were convened in the room.

Eva lay back on her pillows, her hair hanging loosely about her face, her crimson cheeks contrasting painfully with the intense whiteness of her complexion and the thin contour of her limbs and features, and her large, soul-like eyes fixed earnestly on every one.

The servants were struck with a sudden emotion. The spiritual face, the long locks of hair cut off and lying by her,

her father's averted face, and Marie's sobs, struck at once upon the feelings of a sensitive and impressible race; and, as they came in, they looked one on another, sighed, and shook their heads. There was a deep silence, like that of a funeral.

Eva raised herself and looked long and earnestly round at every one. All looked sad and apprehensive. Many of the women hid their faces in their aprons.

"I sent for you all, my dear friends," said Eva, "because I love you. I love you all; and I have something to say to you which I want you always to remember. . . . I am going to leave you. In a few more weeks, you will see me no more——"

Here the child was interrupted by bursts of groans, sobs, and lamentations, which broke from all present, and in which her slender voice was lost entirely. She waited a moment, and then, speaking in a tone that checked the sobs of all, she said:

"If you love me, you must not interrupt me so. Listen to what I say. I want to speak to you about your souls . . . Many of you, I am afraid, are very careless. You are thinking only about this world. I want you to remember that there is a beautiful world, where Jesus is. I am going there, and you can go there; it is for you as much as me. But if you want to go there, you must not live idle, careless, thoughtless lives; you must be Christians. You must remember that each one of you can become angels, and be angels for ever. . . If you want to be Christians, Jesus will help you. You must pray to Him; you must read——"

The child checked herself, looked piteously at them, and said sorrowfully:

"Oh dear—you *can't* read! Poor souls!" and she hid her face in the pillow and sobbed, while many a smothered sob from those she was addressing, who were kneeling on the floor, aroused her.

"Never mind," she said, raising her face and smiling brightly through her tears, "I have prayed for you, and I know Jesus will help you, even if you can't read. Try all to do the best you can; pray every day; ask Him to help you, and get the Bible read to you whenever you can; and I think I shall see you all in heaven."

"Amen," was the murmured response from the lips of Tom and Mammy, and some of the elder ones, who belonged to the Methodist Church. The younger and more thoughtless ones, for the time completely overcome, were sobbing, with their heads bowed upon their knees.

"I know," said Eva, "you all love me."

"Yes! Oh, yes, indeed we do! Lord, bless her!" was the involuntary answer of all.

"Yes, I know you do. There isn't one of you that hasn't always been very kind to me; and I want to give you something that, when you look at, you shall always remember me. I'm going to give all of you a curl of my hair; and, when you look at it, think that I loved you and am gone to heaven, and that I want to see you all there."

It was impossible to describe the scene, as, with tears and sobs, they gathered round the little creature, and took from her hands what seemed to them a last mark of her love. They fell on their knees; they sobbed, and prayed, and kissed the hem of her garment; and the elder ones poured forth words of endearment, mingled in prayers and blessings, after the manner of their susceptible race.

As each one took their gift, Miss Ophelia, who was apprehensive for the effect of all this excitement on her little patient, signed to each one to pass out of the apartment.

At last all were gone, but Tom and Mammy.

"Here, Uncle Tom," said Eva, "is a beautiful one for you. Oh, I am so happy, Uncle Tom, to think I shall see you in heaven, for I'm sure I shall; and Mammy—dear, good, kind Mammy!" she said, fondly throwing her arms round her old nurse, "I know you'll be there, too."

"O Miss Eva, don't see how I can live without ye, no how!" said the faithful creature. "'Pears like it's just taking everything off the place to oncet!" and Mammy gave way to a passion of grief.

Miss Ophelia pushed her and Tom gently from the apartment, and thought they were all gone; but, as she turned, Topsy was standing there.

"Where did you start up from?" she said suddenly.

"I was here," said Topsy, wiping her tears from her eyes. "O Miss Eva, I've been a bad girl; but won't you give *me* one, too?"

"Yes, poor Topsy, to be sure I will. There, every time you look at that, think that I love you, and wanted you to be a good girl!"

"O Miss Eva, I *is* tryin'!" said Topsy earnestly; "but, Lor! it's so hard to be good! 'Pears like I an't used to it, noways!"

"Jesus knows it, Topsy; He is sorry for you; He will help you."

Topsy, with her eyes hid in her apron, was silently passed from the apartment by Miss Ophelia; but, as she went, she hid the precious curl in her bosom.

All being gone, Miss Ophelia shut the door. That worthy lady had wiped away many tears of her own during the scene, but concern for the consequences of such an excitement to her young charge was uppermost in her mind.

Eva after this declined rapidly; there was no more any doubt of the event; the fondest hope could not be blinded. Her beautiful room was avowedly a sick-room; and Miss Ophelia day and night performed the duties of a nurse—and never did her friends appreciate her value more than in that capacity. With so well-trained a hand and eye, such perfect adroitness and practice in every art that could promote neatness and comfort, and keep out of sight every disagreeable incident of sickness—with such a perfect sense of time, such a clear, untroubled head, such an exact accuracy in remembering every prescription and direction of the doctors—she was everything to them. They who had shrugged their shoulders at her little peculiarities and setnesses, so unlike the careless freedom of southern manners, acknowledged that now she was the exact person that was wanted.

Uncle Tom was much in Eva's room. The child suffered much from nervous restlessness, and it was a relief to her to be carried; and it was Tom's greatest delight to carry her little frail form in his arms, resting on a pillow, now up and down her room, now out into the verandah; and when the fresh sea-breezes blew from the lake, and the child felt freshest in the morning, he would sometimes walk with her under the orange-trees in the garden, or, sitting down on some of their old seats, sing to her their favourite old hymns.

Her father often did the same thing; but his frame was slighter, and, when he was weary, Eva would say to him:

"O papa, let Tom take me. Poor fellow! it pleases him; and you know it's all he can do now, and he wants to do something?"

"So do I, Eva," said her father.

"Well, papa, you can do everything, and are everything to me. You read to me—you sit up nights—and Tom has only this one thing, and his singing; and I know, too, he does it easier than you can. He carries me so strong!"

The desire to do something was not confined to him. Every servant in the establishment showed the same feeling, and in their way did what they could.

Poor Mammy's heart yearned towards her darling; but she found no opportunity, night or day, as Marie declared that the state of her mind was such it was impossible for her to rest; and, of course, it was against her principles to let any one else rest. Twenty times in a night, Mammy would be roused to rub her feet, to bathe her head, to find her pocket-handkerchief, to see what the noise was in Eva's room, to let down a curtain because it was too light, or to put it up because it was too dark; and in the day-time, when she longed to have some share in the nursing of her pet, Marie seemed unusually ingenious in keeping her busy anywhere and everywhere all over the house, or about her own person; so that stolen interviews and momentary glimpses were all she could obtain.

"I feel it my duty to be particularly careful of myself now," she would say, "feeble as I am, and with the whole care and nursing of that dear child upon me."

"Indeed, my dear," said St. Clare, "I thought our cousin relieved you of that."

"You talk like a man, St. Clare—just as if a mother *could* be relieved of the care of a child in that state; but, then, it's all alike—no one ever knows what I feel! I can't throw things off as you do."

St. Clare smiled. You must excuse him, he couldn't help it—for St. Clare could smile yet. For so bright and placid was the farewell voyage of the little spirit—by such sweet and fragrant breezes was the small barque borne towards the heavenly shores—that it was impossible to

realise that it was death that was approaching. The child felt no pain—only a tranquil, soft weakness, daily and almost insensibly increasing; and she was so beautiful, so loving, so trustful, so happy, that one could not resist the soothing influence of that air of innocence and peace which seemed so beautiful that he wished to think of no future. It was like that hush of spirit which we feel amid the bright, mild woods of autumn, when the bright hectic flush is on the trees, and the last lingering flowers by the brook; and we joy in it all the more because we know that soon it will all pass away.

The friend who knew most of Eva's own imaginings and foreshadowings was her faithful bearer, Tom. To him she said what she would not disturb her father by saying. To him she imparted those mysterious intimations which the soul feels, as the cords begin to unbind ere it leaves its clay for ever.

Tom, at last, would not sleep in his room, but lay all night in the outer verandah, ready to rouse at every call.

"Uncle Tom, what have you taken to sleeping anywhere and everywhere, like a dog, for?" said Miss Ophelia, "I thought you were one of the orderly sort, that liked to lie in bed in a Christian way."

"I do, Miss Feely," said Tom mysteriously. "I do, but now——"

"Well, what now?"

"We mustn't speak loud. Mas'r St. Clare won't hear on't; but, Miss Feely, you know there must be somebody watchin' for the bridegroom."

"What do you mean, Tom?"

"You know it says in Scripture, 'At midnight there was a great cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh.' That's what I'm spectin' now, every night, Miss Feely; and I couldn't sleep out o' hearin' no ways."

"Why, Uncle Tom, what makes you think so?"

"Miss Eva, she talks to me. The Lord, He sends His messenger in the soul. I must be thar, Miss Feely; for when that ar blessed child goes into the kingdom, they'll open the door so wide we'll all get a look in at the glory, Miss Feely."

"Uncle Tom, did Miss Eva say she felt more unwell than usual to-night?"

"No; but she telled me this morning she was coming nearer—thar's them that tells it to the child, Miss Feely. It's the angels—'it's the trumpet-sound afore the break o' day.'" said Tom, quoting from a favourite hymn.

This dialogue passed between Miss Ophelia and Tom, between ten and eleven one evening, after her arrangements had all been made for the night, when, on going to bolt her outer door, she found Tom stretched along by it, in the outer verandah.

She was not nervous or impressible; but the solemn, heart-felt manner struck her. Eva had been unusually bright and cheerful that afternoon, and had sat raised in her bed, and looked over all her little trinkets and precious things, and designated the friends to whom she would have them given; and her manner was more animated, and her voice more natural, than they had known it for weeks. Her father had been in in the evening, and had said that Eva appeared more like her former self than ever she had done since her sickness; and when he kissed her for the night, he said to Miss Ophelia, "Cousin, we may keep her with us, after all; she is certainly better"; and he had retired with a lighter heart in his bosom than he had had there for weeks.

But at midnight—strange, mystic hour, when the veil between the frail present and the eternal future grows thin—then came the messenger!

There was a sound in that chamber, first of one who stepped quickly. It was Miss Ophelia, who had resolved to sit up all night with her little charge, and who, at the turn of the night, had discerned what experienced nurses significantly call "a change." The outer door was quickly opened, and Tom, who was watching outside, was on the alert in a moment.

"Go for the doctor, Tom! Lose not a moment!" said Miss Ophelia; and, stepping across the room, she rapped at St. Clare's door.

"Cousin," she said, "I wish you would come."

Those words fell on his heart like clods upon a coffin. Why did they? He was up and in the room in an instant, and bending over Eva, who still slept.

What was it he saw that made his heart stand still?

Why was no word spoken between the two? Thou canst say, who hast seen that same expression on the face dearest to thee—that look, indescribable, hopeless, unmistakable, that says to thee that thy beloved is no longer thine.

On the face of the child, however, there was no ghastly imprint—only a high and almost sublime expression—the overshadowing presence of spiritual natures, the dawning of immortal life in that childish soul.

They stood there so still, gazing upon her, that even the ticking of the watch seemed too loud. In a few moments Tom returned with the doctor. He entered, gave one look, and stood silent as the rest.

"When did this change take place?" said he, in a low whisper, to Miss Ophelia.

"About the turn of the night," was the reply.

Marie, roused by the entrance of the doctor, appeared hurriedly from the next room.

"Augustine! Cousin!—Oh!—what?" she hurriedly began.

"Hush!" said St. Clare hoarsely; "*she is dying!*"

Mammy heard the words, and flew to awaken the servants, The house was soon roused—lights were seen, footsteps heard, anxious faces thronged the verandah, and looked tearfully through the glass doors; but St. Clare heard and said nothing—he saw only *that look* on the face of the little sleeper.

"Oh, if she would only wake, and speak once more!" he said; and, stooping over her, he spoke in her ear—"Eva, darling!"

The large blue eyes unclosed—a smile passed over her face; she tried to raise her head, and to speak.

"Do you know me, Eva?"

"Dear papa!" said the child, with a last effort, throwing her arms about his neck. In a moment they dropped again; and, as St. Clare raised his head, he saw a spasm of mortal agony pass over the face—she struggled for breath, and threw up her little hands.

"O God, this is dreadful!" he said, turning away in agony, and wringing Tom's hand, scarce conscious of what he was doing. 'O, Tom, my boy, it is killing me!"

Tom had his master's hands between his own; and with

tears streaming down his dark cheeks, looked up for help where he had always been used to look.

"Pray that this may be cut short!" said St. Clare; "this wrings my heart!"

"Oh, bless the Lord! it's over—it's over, dear master," said Tom, "look at her!"

The child lay panting on her pillows, as one exhausted—the large clear eyes rolled up and fixed. Ah, what said those eyes that spoke so much of heaven? Earth was passed, and earthly pain; but so solemn, so mysterious, was the triumphant brightness of that face, that it checked even the sobs of sorrow. They pressed around her, in breathless stillness.

"Eva!" said St. Clare gently.

She did not hear.

"O Eva, tell us what you see! What is it?" said her father.

A bright, a glorious smile passed over her face, and she said, brokenly—"Oh! love, joy—peace!" gave one sigh, and passed from death into life!

Farewell, beloved child! the bright, eternal doors have closed after thee; we shall see thy sweet face no more. Oh, woe for them who watched thy entrance into heaven, when they wake and find only the cold grey sky of daily life, and thou gone for ever!

CHAPTER XXIII

"THIS IS THE LAST OF EARTH."

THE statuettes and pictures in Eva's room were shrouded in white napkins, and only hushed breathings and muffled footfalls were heard there, and the light stole in solemnly through windows partially darkened by closed blinds.

The bed was draped in white; and there, beneath the drooping angel-figure, lay a little sleeping form—sleeping never to waken!

There is no death to such as thou, dear Eva! neither darkness nor shadow of death; only such a bright fading

as when the morning star fades in the golden dawn. Thine is the victory without the battle—the crown without the conflict.

So did St. Clare think, as, with folded arms, he stood there gazing. Ah! who shall say what he did think? for, from that hour that voices had said, in the dying chamber, "She is gone," it had been all a dreary mist, a heavy "dimness of anguish." He had heard voices around him; he had had questions asked, and answered them; they had asked him when he would have the funeral, and where they should lay her; and he had answered impatiently, that he cared not.

Adolph and Rosa had arranged the chamber. Even now, while St. Clare stood there thinking, little Rosa tripped softly into the chamber with a basket of white flowers. She stepped back when she saw St. Clare, and stopped respectfully; but, seeing that he did not observe her, she came forward to place them around the dead. St. Clare saw her as in a dream, while she placed in the small hand a fair cape jessamine, and, with admirable taste, disposed other flowers around the couch.

The door opened again, and Topsy, her eyes swelled with crying appeared, holding something under her apron. Rosa made a quick, forbidding gesture; but she took a step into the room.

"You must go out!" said Rosa, in a sharp, positive whisper; "*you* haven't any business here!"

"Oh, do let me! I brought a flower—such a pretty one!" said Topsy, holding up a half-blown tea rosebud. "Do let me put just one there."

"Get along!" said Rosa more decidedly.

"Let her stay!" said St. Clare, suddenly stamping his foot. "She shall come."

Rosa suddenly retreated, and Topsy came forward, and laid her offering at the feet of the corpse; then suddenly, with a wild and bitter cry, she threw herself on the floor alongside the bed, and wept and moaned aloud.

Miss Ophelia hastened into the room, and tried to raise and silence her; but in vain.

"O Miss Eva! O Miss Eva! I wish I's dead, too—I do!"

There was a piercing wildness in the cry; the blood flushed into St. Clare's white, marble-like face, and the first tears he had shed since Eva died stood in his eyes.

"Get up, child," said Miss Ophelia, in a softened voice; "don't cry so. Miss Eva is gone to heaven; she is an angel!"

"But I can't see her!" said Topsy. "I never shall see her!" and she sobbed again.

They all stood a moment in silence.

"*She* said she *loved* me," said Topsy—"she did! Oh, dear! oh, dear! there ain't *nobody* left now—there ain't!"

"That's true enough," said St. Clare; "but do," he said to Miss Ophelia, "see if you can't comfort the poor creature."

"I jist wish I hadn't been born," said Topsy. "I didn't want to be born, no ways; and I don't see no use on't."

Miss Ophelia raised her gently but firmly, and took her, from the room; but, as she did so, some tears fell from her eyes.

"Topsy, you poor child," she said, as she led her into her room, "don't give up! *I* can love you, though I am not like that dear little child. I hope I've learnt something of the love of Christ from her. I can love you—I do; and I'll try to help you to grow up a good Christian girl."

Miss Ophelia's voice was more than her words, and more than that were the honest tears that fell down her face. From that hour, she acquired an influence over the mind of the destitute child that she never lost.

"O my Eva, whose little hour on earth did so much of good, thought St. Clare, "what account have I to give for my long years?"

In a few days, after the funeral, the St. Clare family were back again in the city; Augustine with the restlessness of grief, longing for another scene to change the current of his thoughts. So they left the house and gardens, with its little grave, and came back to New Orleans, and St. Clare walked the streets busily, and strove to fill up the chasm in his heart with hurry and bustle, and change of place; and people who saw him in the street, or met him at the *café*, knew of his loss only by the weed on his hat; for

there he was, smiling and talking, and reading the newspapers, and speculating on politics, and attending to business matters; and who could see that all this smiling outside was but a hollow shell over a heart that was a dark and silent sepulchre.

"Mr. St. Clare is a singular man," said Marie to Miss Ophelia, in a complaining tone. "I used to think if there was anything in the world he did love, it was our dear little Eva; but he seems to be forgetting her very easily. I cannot ever get him to talk about her. I really did think he would show more feeling."

"Still waters run deepest, they used to tell me," said Miss Ophelia oracularly.

"Oh, I don't believe in such things; it's all talk. If people have feeling, they will show it—they can't help it; but then it's a great misfortune to have feeling. I'd rather have been made like St. Clare. My feelings prey upon me so!"

While the conversation was taking place in the parlour, another was going on in St. Clare's library.

Tom, who was always uneasily following his master about, had seen him go into his library, some hours before; and, after vainly waiting for him to come out, determined, at last, to make an errand in. He entered softly. St. Clare lay on his lounge at the farther end of the room. He was lying on his face, with Eva's Bible open before him, at a little distance. Tom walked up, and stood by the sofa. He hesitated; and, while he was hesitating, St. Clare suddenly raised himself up. The honest face, so full of grief, and with such an imploring expression of affection and sympathy, struck his master. He laid his hand on Tom's and bowed down his forehead on it.

"O Tom, my boy, the whole world is as empty as an egg-shell."

"I know it, mas'r—I know it," said Tom. "But, oh, if mas'r could only look up—up where our dear Miss Eva is—up to the dear Lord Jesus!"

"Ah, Tom! I do look up; but the trouble is, I don't see anything when I do. I wish I could."

Tom sighed heavily.

"It seems to be given to children, and poor, honest

fellows like you, to see what we can't," said St. Clare. "How comes it?"

"Thou hast 'hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes,'" murmured Tom; "'even so, Father, for it seemed good in Thy sight.'"

"Tom, I don't believe—I can't believe; I've got the habit of doubting," said St. Clare. "I want to believe this Bible, and I can't."

"Dear mas'r, pray to the good Lord—'Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief.'"

"Who knows anything about anything?" said St. Clare, his eyes wandering dreamily, and speaking to himself. "Was all that beautiful love and faith only one of the ever-shifting phases of human feeling, having nothing real to rest on, passing away with the little breath? And is there no more Eva—no heaven—no Christ—nothing?"

"O dear mas'r, there is! I know it; I'm sure of it," said Tom, falling on his knees. "Do, do, dear mas'r, believe it!"

"How do you know there's any Christ, Tom? You never saw the Lord."

"Felt Him in my soul, mas'r—feel him now! O mas'r, when I was sold away from my old woman and the children, I was jest a'most broke up. I felt as if there warn't nothin' left; and then the good Lord, He stood by me, and He says, 'Fear not, Tom'; and He brings light and joy into a poor feller's soul—makes all peace; and I's so happy, and loves everybody, and feels willin' jest to be the Lord's and have the Lord's will done, and be jest where the Lord wants to put me. I know it couldn't come from me, 'cause I's a poor, complainin' critter; it comes from the Lord; and I know He's willing to do for mas'r."

Tom spoke with fast-running tears and choking voice. St. Clare leaned his head on his shoulder, and wrung the hard, faithful black hand.

"Tom, you love me?" he said.

"I's willin' to lay down my life, this blessed day, to see mas'r a Christian."

"Poor, foolish boy!" said St. Clare, half raising himself. "I'm not worthy the love of one good, honest heart, like yours."

"O mas'r, dere's more than me loves you—the blessed Lord Jesus loves you."

"How do you know that, Tom?" said St. Clare.

"Feels it in my soul. O mas'r! 'the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge.'"

"Singular!" said St. Clare, turning away, "that the story of a man that lived and died eighteen hundred years ago can affect people so yet! But He was no man," he added suddenly. "No man ever had such long and living power! O that I could believe what my mother taught me, and pray as I did when I was a boy!"

"If mas'r pleases," said Tom, "Miss Eva used to read this so beautifully. I wish mas'r 'd be so good as read it. Don't get no readin' hardly now Miss Eva's gone."

The chapter was the eleventh of John—the touching account of the raising of Lazarus. St. Clare read it aloud, often pausing to wrestle down feelings which were aroused by the pathos of the story. Tom knelt before him, with clasped hands, and with an absorbed expression of love, trust, adoration, on his quiet face.

"Tom," said his master, "this is all *real* to you!"

"I can jest fairly *see* it, mas'r," said Tom.

"I wish I had your eyes, Tom."

"I wish to the dear Lord mas'r had!"

"But, Tom, you know that I have a great deal more knowledge than you. What if I should tell you that I don't believe this Bible?"

"O mas'r!" said Tom, holding up his hands, with a deprecating gesture.

"Wouldn't it shake your faith some, Tom?"

"Not a grain," said Tom.

"Why, Tom, you must know I know the most."

"O mas'r, haven't you jest read how He hides from the wise and prudent, and reveals unto babes? But mas'r wasn't in earnest, for sartin, now?" said Tom anxiously.

"No, Tom, I was not. I don't disbelieve, and I think there is reason to believe; and still I don't. It's a troublesome bad habit I've got, Tom."

"If mas'r would only pray!"

"How do you know I don't, Tom?"

"Does mas'r?"

"I would, Tom, if there was anybody there when I pray, but it's all speaking unto nothing when I do. But come, Tom, you pray, now, and show me how."

Tom's heart was full; he poured it out in prayer, like waters that have been long suppressed. One thing was plain enough; Tom thought there was somebody to hear, whether there were or not. In fact, St. Clare felt himself borne, on the tide of his faith and feeling, almost to the gates of that heaven he seemed so vividly to conceive. It seemed to bring him nearer to Eva.

"Thank you, my boy!" said St. Clare, when Tom rose. "I like to hear you, Tom; but go, now, and leave me alone; some other time I'll talk more."

Tom silently left the room.

CHAPTER XXIV

REUNION

WEEK after week glided away in the St. Clare mansion and the waves of life settled back to their usual flow where that little barque had gone down.

All the interests and hopes of St. Clare's life had unconsciously wound themselves around this child. It was for Eva that he had managed his property; it was for Eva that he had planned the disposal of his time; and, to do this and that for Eva—to buy, improve, alter, and arrange or dispose something for her—had been so long his habit, that now she was gone there seemed nothing to be thought of, and nothing to be done.

St. Clare had never pretended to govern himself by any religious obligation; and a certain fineness of nature gave him such an instinctive view of the extent of the requirements of Christianity that he shrank, by anticipation, from what he felt would be the exactions of his own conscience, if he once did resolve to assume them. For, so inconsistent is human nature, especially in the ideal, that not to undertake a thing at all seems better than to undertake and come short.

Still St. Clare was in many respects another man. He read

his little Eva's Bible seriously and honestly; he thought more soberly and practically of his relations to his servants —enough to make him extremely dissatisfied with both his past and present course; and one thing he did, soon after his return to New Orleans, and that was to commence the legal steps necessary to Tom's emancipation, which was to be perfected as soon as he could get through the necessary formalities. Meanwhile, he attached himself to Tom more and more every day. In all the wide world, there was nothing that seemed to remind him so much of Eva; and he would insist on keeping him constantly about him, and, fastidious and unapproachable as he was with regard to his deeper feelings, he almost thought aloud to Tom. Nor would any one have wondered at it, who had seen the expression of affection and devotion with which Tom continually followed his young master.

"Well, Tom," said St. Clare, the day after he had commenced the legal formalities for his enfranchisement, "I'm going to make a free man of you; so, have your trunk packed, and get ready to set out for Kentuck."

The sudden light of joy that shone in Tom's face as he raised his hands to heaven, his emphatic "Bless the Lord!" rather discomposed St. Clare; he did not like it that Tom should be so ready to leave him.

"You haven't had such very bad times here, that you need be in such a rapture, Tom," he said dryly.

"No, no, mas'r! 'tan't that—it's bein' a *free man!* That's what I'm joyin' for."

"Why, Tom, don't you think, for your own part, you've been better off than to be free?"

"*No, indeed*, Mas'r St. Clare!" said Tom, with a flash of energy. "No, indeed!"

"Why, Tom, you couldn't possibly have earned, by your work, such clothes and living such as I have given you."

"Knows all that, Mas'r St. Clare; mas'r's been too good; but, mas'r, I'd rather have poor clothes, poor house, poor everything, and have 'em *mine*, than have the best, and have 'em any man's else! I had *so*, mas'r: I think's it's natur', mas'r!"

The conversation was here interrupted by the announcement of some visitors.

Marie St. Clare felt the loss of Eva as deeply as she could feel anything; and as she was a woman that had a great faculty of making everybody unhappy when she was, her immediate attendants had still stronger reason to regret the loss of their young mistress, whose winning ways and gentle intercessions had so often been a shield to them from the tyrannical and selfish exactions of her mother. Poor old Mammy, in particular, whose heart, severed from all natural domestic ties, had consoled itself with this one beautiful being, was almost heart-broken. She cried day and night, and was, from excess of sorrow, less skilful and alert in her ministrations on her mistress than usual, which drew down a constant storm of invectives on her defenceless head.

Miss Ophelia felt the loss; but, in her good and honest heart, it bore fruit unto everlasting life. She was more softened, more gentle; and though equally assiduous in every duty, it was with a chastened and quiet air, as one who communed with her own heart not in vain. She was more diligent in teaching Topsy—taught her mainly from the Bible—did not any longer shrink from her touch, or manifest an ill-repressed disgust, because she felt none. She viewed her now through the softened medium that Eva's hand had first held before her eyes, and saw in her only an immortal creature, whom God had sent to be led by her to glory and virtue. Topsy did not become at once a saint; but the life and death of Eva did work a marked change in her. The callous indifference was gone; there was now sensibility, hope, desire, and the striving for good—a strife irregular, interrupted, suspended oft, but yet renewed again.

One day, when Topsy had been sent for by Miss Ophelia, she came, hastily thrusting something into her bosom.

"What are you doing there, you limb? You've been stealing something, I'll be bound," said the imperious little Rosa, who had been sent to call her, seizing her, at the same time, roughly by the arm.

"You go 'long, Miss Rosa!" said Topsy, pulling from her; "'tan't none o' your business!"

"None o' your sa'ce!" said Rosa. "I saw you hiding something—I know yer tricks!" and Rosa seized her arm, and tried to force her hand into her bosom, while Topsy,

enraged, kicked and fought valiantly for what she considered her rights. The clamour and confusion of the battle drew Miss Ophelia and St. Clare both to the spot.

"She's been stealing!" said Rosa, "give it to me."

"I shan't, neither!" vociferated Topsy, sobbing with passion.

"Give me that, whatever it is!" said Miss Ophelia firmly.

Topsy hesitated; but, on a second order, pulled out of her bosom a little parcel done up in the foot of one of her own old stockings.

Miss Ophelia turned it out. There was a small book, which had been given to Topsy by Eva, containing a single verse of Scripture, arranged for every day in the year, and in a paper the curl of hair that she had given her on that memorable day when she had taken her last farewell.

St. Clare was a good deal affected at the sight of it; the little book had been rolled in a long strip of black crape, torn from the funeral weeds.

"What did you wrap *this* round the book for?" said St Clare, holding up the crape.

"'Cause—'cause—'cause 'twas Miss Eva. Oh, don't take 'em away please!" she said; and, sitting flat down on the floor, and putting her apron over her head, she began to sob vehemently.

It was a curious mixture of the pathetic and the ludicrous—the little old stocking—black crape—text-book—fair soft curl—and Topsy's utter distress.

St. Clare smiled; but there were tears in his eyes as he said:

"Come, come—don't cry; you shall have them!" and putting them together, he threw them into her lap, and drew Miss Ophelia with him into the parlour.

"I really think you can make something of that concern," he said, pointing with his thumb backward over his shoulder. "Any mind that is capable of *real sorrow* is capable of good. You must try and do something with her."

"The child has improved greatly," said Miss Ophelia. "I have great hopes of her; but, Augustine," she said, laying her hand on his arm, "one thing I want to ask; whose is this child to be—yours or mine?"

"Why, I gave her to *you*," said Augustine.

"But not legally; I want her to be mine legally," said Miss Ophelia "And I want it done now."

"What's your hurry?"

"I want to make sure of it," said Miss Ophelia. "You may die, or fail, and then Topsy be hustled off to auction, spite of all I can do."

"Really, you are quite provident. Well, seeing I'm in the hands of a Yankee, there is nothing for it but to concede"; and St. Clare rapidly wrote off a deed of gift, which, as he was well versed in the forms of law, he could easily do, and signed his name to it in sprawling capitals, concluding by a tremendous flourish.

"There, isn't that black and white, now, Miss Vermont?" he said, as he handed it to her.

"Good boy," said Miss Ophelia, smiling. "But must it not be witnessed?"

"Oh, bother!—yes. Here," he said, opening the door into Marie's apartment, "Marie, cousin wants your autograph; just put your name down here."

"What's this?" said Marie, as she ran over the paper. "Ridiculous! I thought cousin was too pious for such horrid things," she added, as she carelessly wrote her name; "but if she has a fancy for that article, I'm sure she's welcome."

"There now, she's yours, body and soul," said St. Clare, handing the paper.

'No more mine now than she was before," said Miss Ophelia. "Nobody but God has a right to give her to me; but I can protect her now."

"Well, she's yours by a fiction of law, then," said St. Clare, as he turned back into the parlour, and sat down to his paper.

Miss Ophelia, who seldom sat much in Marie's company, followed him to the parlour, having first carefully laid away the paper.

"Augustine," she said suddenly, as she sat knitting, "have you ever made any provision for your servants, in case of your death?"

"No," said St. Clare, as he read on.

"Then all your indulgence to them may prove a great cruelty, by and by."

St. Clare had often thought the same thing himself; but he answered negligently:

"Well, I mean to make a provision, by and by."

"When?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Oh, one of these days."

"What if you should die first?"

"Cousin, what's the matter?" said St. Clare, laying down his paper and looking at her. "Do you think I show symptoms of yellow fever or cholera, that you are making post-mortem arrangements with such zeal?"

"'In the midst of life we are in death,'" said Miss Ophelia.

St. Clare rose up, and, laying the paper down, carelessly walked to the door that stood open on the verandah, to put an end to a conversation that was not agreeable to him. Mechanically he repeated the last word again—"*Death!*"—and, as he leaned against the railings and watched the sparkling water as it rose and fell in the fountain, and, as in a dim and dizzy haze, saw the flowers and trees and vases of the court, he repeated again the mystic word so common in every mouth, yet of such fearful power—"DEATH!" "Strange that there should be such a word," he said, "and such a thing, and we ever forget it; that one should be living, warm, and beautiful, full of hopes, desires, and wants one day, and the next be gone, utterly gone, and for ever!"

St. Clare was absent and thoughtful all tea-time. After tea, he and Marie and Miss Ophelia took possession of the parlour, almost in silence.

Marie disposed herself on a lounge, under a silken mosquito curtain, and was soon sound asleep. Miss Ophelia silently busied herself with her knitting. St. Clare sat down to the piano, and began playing a soft and melancholy movement with the æolian accompaniment. He seemed in a deep reverie, and to be soliloquizing by music. After a little, he opened one of the drawers, took out an old music-book whose leaves were yellow with age, and began turning it over.

"There," he said, "this was one of my mother's books, and here is her handwriting—come and look at it. She copied and arranged this from Mozart's Requiem." Miss Ophelia came accordingly.

"It was something she used to sing often," said St. Clare. "I think I can hear her now."

He struck a few majestic chords, and began singing that grand old Latin piece, the "Dies Iræ."

St. Clare threw a deep and pathetic expression into the words; for the shadowy veil of years seemed drawn away, and he seemed to hear his mother's voice leading his. Voice and instrument seemed both living, and threw out with vivid sympathy those strains which the ethereal Mozart first conceived as his own dying requiem.

When St. Clare had done singing, he sat leaning his head upon his hand a few moments, and then began walking up and down the floor.

"What a sublime conception is that of a last judgment!" said he. "A righting of all the wrongs of ages!—a solving of all moral problems by an unanswerable wisdom! It is, indeed, a wonderful image!"

"It is a fearful one to us," said Miss Ophelia.

"It ought to be to me, I suppose," said St. Clare, stopping thoughtfully. "I was reading this afternoon that chapter in Matthew that gives an account of it, and I have been struck with it. One should have expected some terrible enormities charged to those who are excluded from heaven, as the reason; but no—they are condemned for *not* doing positive good, as if that included every possible harm."

"Perhaps," said Miss Ophelia, "it is impossible for a person who does no good not to do harm."

"And what," said St. Clare, speaking abstractedly, but with deep feeling, "what shall be said of one whose own heart, whose education, and the wants of society, have called in vain to some noble purpose; who has floated on, a dreamy, neutral spectator of the struggles, agonies, and wrongs of man, when he should have been a worker?"

"I should say," said Miss Ophelia, "that he ought to repent, and begin anew."

"Always practical and to the point!" said St. Clare, his face breaking out into a smile. "You never leave me any time for general reflections, cousin; you always bring me short up against the actual present; you have a kind of eternal *now* always in your mind."

"*Now* is all the time I have anything to do with," said Miss Ophelia.

"Dear little Eva—poor child!" said St. Clare, "she had set her little simple soul on a good work for me."

It was the first time since Eva's death that he had ever said as many words as these of her, and he spoke now evidently repressing very strong feeling.

"I don't know what makes me think of my mother so much to-night," he continued. "I have a strange kind of feeling, as if she were near me. I keep thinking of things she used to say. Strange, what brings these past things so vividly back to us, sometimes!"

St. Clare walked up and down the room for some minutes more, and then said:

"I believe I'll go down street a few moments, and hear the news to-night."

He took his hat, and passed out.

Tom followed him to the passage, out of the court, and asked if he should attend him.

"No, my boy," said St. Clare. "I shall be back in an hour."

Tom sat down in the verandah. It was a beautiful moonlight evening, and he sat watching the rising and falling spray of the fountain, and listening to its murmur. Tom thought of his home, and that he should soon be a free man, and able to return to it at will. He thought how he should work to buy his wife and boys. He felt the muscles of his brawny arms with a sort of joy, as he thought they would soon belong to himself, and how much they could do to work out the freedom of his family. And, so musing, he fell asleep. Tom was awakened by a loud knocking and the sound of many voices at the gate.

He hastened to undo it; and, with smothered voices and heavy tread, came several men, bringing a body, wrapped in a cloak, and lying on a shutter. The light of the lamp fell full on the face; and Tom gave a wild cry of amazement and despair, that rang through all the galleries, as the men advanced with their burden to the open parlour door, where Miss Ophelia still sat knitting.

St. Clare had turned into a *café*, to look over an evening paper. As he was reading, an affray arose between two

gentlemen in the room, who were both partially intoxicated. St. Clare and one or two others made an effort to separate them, and St. Clare received a fatal stab in the side with a bowie-knife, which he was attempting to wrest from one of them.

The house was full of cries and lamentations, shrieks and screams, servants frantically tearing their hair, throwing themselves on the ground, or running distractedly about, lamenting. Tom and Miss Ophelia alone seemed to have any presence of mind; for Marie was in strong hysteric convulsions. At Miss Ophelia's direction, one of the lounges in the parlour was hastily prepared, and the bleeding form laid upon it. St. Clare had fainted through pain and loss of blood; but as Miss Ophelia applied restoratives, he revived, opened his eyes, looked fixedly on them, looked earnestly around the room, his eyes travelling wistfully over every object, and finally they rested on his mother's picture.

The physician now arrived and made his examination. It was evident, from the expression of his face, that there was no hope; but he applied himself to dressing the wound, and he and Miss Ophelia and Tom proceeded composedly with this work, amid the lamentations and sobs and cries of the affrighted servants, who had clustered about the doors and windows of the verandah.

"Now," said the physician, "we must turn all these creatures out; all depends on his being kept quiet."

St. Clare opened his eyes, and looked fixedly on the distressed beings whom Miss Ophelia and the doctor were trying to urge from the apartment. "Poor creatures!" he said; and an expression of bitter self-reproach passed over his face. Adolph absolutely refused to go. Terror had deprived him of all presence of mind; he threw himself along on the floor, and nothing could persuade him to rise. The rest yielded to Miss Ophelia's urgent representations that their master's safety depended on their stillness and obedience.

St. Clare could say but little; he lay with his eyes shut, but it was evident that he wrestled with bitter thoughts. After a while he laid his hand on Tom's, who was kneeling beside him, and said, "Tom! poor fellow!"

"What, mas'r?" said Tom, earnestly.

"I am dying!" said St. Clare, pressing his hand; "pray!"

"If you would like a clergyman——" said the physician.

St. Clare hastily shook his head, and said again to Tom, more earnestly, "Pray!"

And Tom did pray, with all his mind and strength, for the soul that was passing—the soul that seemed looking so steadily and mournfully from those large, melancholy eyes. It was literally prayer offered with strong crying and tears.

When Tom ceased to speak, St. Clare reached out and took his hand, looking earnestly at him, but saying nothing. He closed his eyes, but still retained his hold; for, in the gates of eternity, the black hand and the white hold each other with an equal clasp. He murmured softly to himself, at broken intervals.

"Recordare, Jesu pie—
* * * * *
Ne me perdas—illa die:
Quærens me—sedisti lassus."

It was evident that the words he had been singing that evening were passing through his mind—words of entreaty addressed to Infinite Pity. His lips moved at intervals, as parts of the hymn fell brokenly from them.

"His mind is wandering," said the doctor.

"No, it is coming HOME at last!" said St. Clare energetically; "at last! at last!"

The effort of speaking exhausted him. The sinking paleness of death fell on him; but with it there fell, as if shed from the wings of some pitying spirit, a beautiful expression of peace, like that of a wearied child who sleeps.

So he lay for a few moments. They saw that the mighty hand was on him. Just before the spirit parted, he opened his eyes with a sudden light, as of joy and recognition, and said, "*Mother!*" and then he was gone!

CHAPTER XXV

THE UNPROTECTED

We hear often of the distress of the negro servants on the loss of a kind master, and with good reason ; for no creature on God's earth is left more utterly unprotected and desolate than the slave in these circumstances.

The number of those men who know how to use wholly irresponsible power humanely and generously is small. Everybody knows this, and the slave knows it best of all ; so he feels that there are ten chances of his finding an allusive and tyrannical master, to one of his finding a considerate and kind one. Therefore it is that the wail over a kind master is loud and long, as well it may be.

When St. Clare breathed his last, terror and consternation took hold of all his household. He had been stricken down so in a moment, in the flower and strength of his youth. Every room and gallery of the house resounded with sobs and shrieks of despair.

Marie, whose nervous system had been enervated by a constant course of self-indulgence, had nothing to support the terror of the shock, and, at the time her husband breathed his last, was passing from one fainting fit to another ; and he to whom she had been joined in the mysterious tie of marriage passed from her for ever, without the possibility of even a parting word.

Miss Ophelia, with characteristic strength and self-control, had remained with her kinsman to the last—all eye, all ear, all attention, doing everything of the little that could be done, and joined with her whole soul in the tender and impassioned prayers which the poor slave had poured forth for the soul of his dying master.

Tom's whole soul was filled with thoughts of eternity ; and while he ministered around the lifeless clay, he did not once think that the sudden stroke had left him in hopeless slavery. He felt at peace about his master, for in that hour when he had poured forth his prayer into the bosom of his Father, he had found an answer of quietness and assurance

springing up within himself. In the depths of his own affectionate nature he felt able to perceive something of the fullness of Divine love; for an old oracle hath thus written: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Tom hoped and trusted, and was at peace.

But the funeral passed, with all its pageant of black crape, and prayers, and solemn faces; and back rolled the cool, muddy waves of everyday life; and up came the everlasting hard inquiry of "What is to be done next?"

It rose to the mind of Marie, as dressed in loose mourning-robes, and surrounded by anxious servants, she sat up in a great easy-chair, and inspected samples of crape and bombazine. It rose to Miss Ophelia, who began to turn her thoughts towards her northern home. It rose, in silent terrors, to the minds of the servants, who well knew the unfeeling, tyrannical character of the mistress in whose hands they were left. All knew very well that the indulgences which had been accorded to them were not from their mistress, but from their master; and that, now he was gone, there would be no screen between them and every tyrannous infliction which a temper soured by affliction might devise.

It was about a fortnight after the funeral that Miss Ophelia, busied one day in her apartment, heard a gentle tap at the door. She opened it, and there stood Rosa, the pretty young quadroon whom we have before often noticed, her hair in disorder, and her eyes swelled with crying.

"O Miss Feely," she said, falling on her knees, and catching the skirt of her dress, "*do, do* go to Miss Marie for me! Do plead for me! She's goin' to send me out to be whipped—look there!" And she handed to Miss Ophelia a paper.

It was an order, written in Marie's delicate Italian hand, to the master of a whipping establishment, to give the bearer fifteen lashes.

"What have you been doing?" said Miss Ophelia.

"You know, Miss Feely, I've got such a bad temper; it's very bad of me. I was trying on Miss Marie's dress, and she slapped my face; and I spoke out before I thought, and was saucy; and she said she'd bring me down, and have me know, once for all, that I wasn't going to be so

topping as I had been; and she wrote this, and says I shall carry it. I'd rather she'd kill me, right out."

Miss Ophelia stood considering with the paper in her hand.

"You see, Miss Feely," said Rosa, "I don't mind the whipping so much, if Miss Marie or you was to do it; but to be sent to a *man!* and such a horrid man!—the shame of it, Miss Feely!"

Miss Ophelia well knew that it was the universal custom to send women and young girls to the whipping-house, to the hands of the lowest of men—men vile enough to make this their profession—there to be subjected to brutal exposure and shameful correction. She had *known* it before; but hitherto she had never realised it, till she saw the slender form of Rosa almost convulsed with distress. All the honest blood of womanhood, the strong New England blood of liberty, flushed to her cheeks, and throbbed bitterly in her indignant heart; but, with habitual prudence and self-control, she mastered herself, and, crushing the paper firmly in her hand, she merely said to Rosa—"Sit down, child, while I go to your mistress."

"Shameful! monstrous! outrageous!" she said to herself as she was crossing the parlour.

She found Marie sitting up in her easy-chair, with Mammy standing by her combing her hair; and Jane sat on the ground before her, busy in chafing her feet.

"How do you find yourself to-day?" said Miss Ophelia.

A deep sigh and closing of the eyes was the only reply for a moment; and then Marie answered, "Oh, I don't know, cousin; I suppose I'm as well as I ever shall be!" And Marie wiped her eyes with a cambric handkerchief, bordered with an inch of deep black.

"I came," said Miss Ophelia, with a short dry cough, such as commonly introduces a difficult subject, "I came to speak with you about poor Rosa."

Marie's eyes were opened wide enough now, and a flush rose to her sallow cheeks as she answered sharply:

"Well! what about her?"

"She is very sorry for her fault."

"She is, is she? She'll be sorrier before I've done with her! I've endured that child's impudence long enough; and now I'll bring her down—I'll make her lie in the dust!"

"But could you not punish her some other way, some way that would be less shameful?"

"I mean to shame her; that's just what I want. She has all her life presumed on her delicacy, and her good looks, and her lady-like airs, till she forgets who she is; and I'll give her one lesson that will bring her down, I fancy!"

"But cousin, consider that, if you destroy delicacy and a sense of shame in a young girl, you deprave her very fast."

"Delicacy!" said Marie, with a scornful laugh, "a fine word for such as she! I'll teach her, with all her airs, that she's no better than the raggedest wench that walks the streets! She'll take no more airs with me!"

"You will answer to God for such cruelty!" said Miss Ophelia.

"Cruelty! I'd like to know what the cruelty is? I wrote orders for only fifteen lashes, and told him to put them on lightly. I'm sure there's no cruelty there!"

"No cruelty!" said Miss Ophelia. "I'm sure any girl might rather be killed outright!"

"It might seem so to anybody with your feeling, but all those creatures get used to it; it's the only way they can be kept in order. Once let them feel that they are to take any airs about delicacy, and all that, and they'll run all over you, just as my servants always have. I've begun now to bring them under; and I'll have them all to know that I'll send one out to be whipped as soon as another if they don't mind themselves!" said Marie, looking around her decidedly.

Jane hung her head and cowered at this, for she felt as if it was particularly directed to her. Miss Ophelia sat for a moment, as if she had swallowed some explosive mixture, and was ready to burst. Then, recollecting the utter uselessness of contention with such a nature, she shut her lips resolutely, gathered herself up, and walked out of the room.

It was hard to go back and tell Rosa that she could do nothing for her; and, shortly after, one of the man-servants came to say that her mistress had ordered him to take Rosa

with him to the whipping-house, whither she was hurried, in spite of her tears and entreaties.

A few days after, Tom was standing musing by the balconies, when he was joined by Adolph, who, since the death of his master, had been entirely crestfallen and disconsolate. Adolph knew that he had always been an object of dislike to Marie, but while his master lived he had paid but little attention to it. Now that he was gone, he had moved about in daily dread and trembling, not knowing what might befall him next. Marie had held several consultations with her lawyer. After communicating with St. Clare's brother, it was determined to sell the place, and all the servants, except her own personal property, and these she intended to take with her, and go back to her father's plantation.

"Do ye know, Tom, that we've all got to be sold?" said Adolph.

"How did you hear that?" said Tom.

"I hid myself behind the curtains when missis was talking with the lawyer. In a few days we shall all be sent off to auction, Tom?"

"The Lord's will be done!" said Tom, folding his arms and sighing heavily.

"We'll never get another such a master," said Adolph apprehensively; "but I'd rather be sold than take my chance under missis."

Tom turned away; his heart was full. The hope of liberty, the thought of distant wife and children, rose up before his patient soul, as to the mariner shipwrecked almost in port rises the vision of the church-spire and loving roofs of his native village, seen over the top of some black wave only for one last farewell. He drew his arms tightly over his bosom, and choked back the bitter tears, and tried to pray. The poor old soul had such a singular, unaccountable, prejudice in favour of liberty that it was a hard wrench for him; and the more he said, "Thy will be done," the worse he felt.

He sought Miss Ophelia, who, ever since Eva's death, had treated him with marked and respectful kindness.

"Miss Feely," he said, "Mas'r St. Clare promised me my freedom. He told me that he had begun to take it out

for me; and now, perhaps, if Miss Feely would be good enough to speak about it to missis, she would feel like going on with it, as it was Mas'r St. Clare's wish."

"I'll speak for you Tom, and do my best," said Miss Ophelia, "but if it depends on Mrs. St. Clare, I can't hope much for you; nevertheless I will try."

This incident occurred a few days after that of Rosa, while Miss Ophelia was busied in preparations to return north.

Seriously reflecting within herself, she considered that perhaps she had shown too hasty a warmth of language in her former interview with Marie; and she resolved that she would now endeavour to moderate her zeal, and to be as conciliatory as possible. So the good soul gathered herself up, and taking her knitting, resolved to go into Marie's room, be as agreeable as possible, and negotiate Tom's case with all the diplomatic skill of which she was mistress.

"There's one thing I wanted to speak to you about," said Miss Ophelia. "Augustine promised Tom his liberty, and began the legal forms necessary to it. I hope you will use your influence to have it perfected."

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing!" said Marie sharply. "Tom is one of the most valuable servants on the place; it couldn't be afforded any way. Besides, what does he want of liberty? He's a great deal better off as he is."

"Well," said Miss Ophelia energetically, "I know it was one of the last wishes of your husband that Tom should have his liberty; it was one of the promises that he made to dear little Eva on her death-bed, and I should not think that you will feel at liberty to disregard it."

Marie had her face covered with her handkerchief at this appeal, and began sobbing and using her smelling-bottle with great vehemence.

"Everybody goes against me!" she said. "Everybody is so inconsiderate! I shouldn't have expected that *you* would bring up all these remembrances of my troubles to me; it's so inconsiderate! But nobody ever does consider—my trials are so peculiar! It is so hard that when I had only one daughter, she should have been taken!—and when I had a husband that just exactly suited me—and I'm so hard to be suited!—he should be taken! And you seem to have so little feeling for me, and keep bringing it up

to me so carelessly—when you know how it overcomes me! I suppose you mean well; but it is very inconsiderate, very!" And Marie sobbed, and gasped for breath, and called Mammy to open the window, and to bring her the camphor-bottle, and to bathe her head and unhook her dress; and, in the general confusion that ensued, Miss Ophelia made her escape to her apartment.

She saw at once that it would do no good to say anything more, for Marie had an indefinite capacity for hysteric fits; and after this, whenever her husband's or Eva's wishes with regard to the servants were alluded to, she always found it convenient to set one in operation. Miss Ophelia therefore did the next best thing she could for Tom; she wrote a letter to Mrs. Shelby for him, stating his troubles, and urging them to send to his relief.

The next day, Tom and Adolph, and some half-dozen other servants, were marched down to the slave warehouse to await the convenience of the trader, who was going to make up a lot for auction.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SLAVE-WAREHOUSE

It was a day or two after the conversation between Marie and Miss Ophelia, that Tom, Adolph, and about a half a dozen others of the St. Clare estate, were turned over to the loving kindness of Mr. Skeggs, the keeper of a depôt on —— Street, to await the auction next day.

Tom had with him quite a sizeable trunk full of clothing, as had most others of them. They were ushered for the night into a long room, where many other men of ages, sizes, and shades of complexion were assembled, and from which roars of laughter and unthinking merriment were proceeding.

"Ah, ah! that's right. Go it, boys, go it!" said Mr. Skeggs, the keeper. "My people are always so merry! Sambo, I see!" he said, speaking approvingly to a burly negro who was performing tricks of low buffoonery, which occasioned the shouts which Tom had heard.

As might be imagined, Tom was in no humour to join these proceedings; and therefore, setting his trunk as far as possible from the noisy group, he sat down on it and leaned his face against the wall.

The dealers in the human article make scrupulous and systematic efforts to promote noisy mirth among them, as a means of drowning reflection and rendering them insensible to their condition. The whole object of the training to which the negro is put, from the time he is sold in the northern market till he arrives south, is systematically directed towards making him callous, unthinking and brutal.

"What dat ar nigger doin' here?" said Sambo, coming up to Tom, after Mr. Skeggs had left the room. Sambo was full black, of great size, very lively, voluble, and full of trick and grimace.

"What you doin' here?" said Sambo, coming up to Tom, and poking him facetiously in the side. "Meditatin', eh?"

"I am to be sold at the auction to-morrow!" said Tom quietly.

"Sold at auction—haw! boys, an't this yer fun? I wisht I was gwine that ar way!—tell ye, wouldn't I make 'em laugh? But how is it?—dis yer whole lot gwine to-morrow?" said Sambo, laying his hand freely on Adolph's shoulder.

"Please to let me alone!" said Adolph fiercely, straightening himself up with extreme disgust.

"Law, now, boys, dis yer's one o' yer white niggers—kind o' cream-colour, ye know, scented!" said he, coming up to Adolph and sniffing. "O Lor! he'd do for a tobaccer-shop; they could keep him to scent snuff! Lor, he'd keep a whole shop agwine—he would!"

"I say, keep off, can't you!" said Adolph, enraged.

"Lor, now, how touchy we is, we white niggers! Look at us, now!" and Sambo gave a ludicrous imitation of Adolph's manner; "here's de airs and graces. We's been in a good family, I specs."

"Yes," said Adolph; "I had a master that could have bought you all for old truck!"

"Laws, now, only think," said Sambo, "the gentlemens that we is!"

"I belonged to the St. Clare family," said Adolph proudly.

"Lor, did you! Be hanged if they ar'n't lucky to get shet of ye. Spects they gwine to trade ye off with a lot o' cracked teapots and sich like!" said Sambo, with a provoking grin.

Adolph, enraged at this taunt, flew furiously at his adversary, swearing and striking on every side of him. The rest laughed and shouted, and the uproar brought the keeper to the door.

"What now, boys? Order, order!" he said, coming in and flourishing a large whip.

All fled in different directions, except Sambo, who presuming on the favour which the keeper had to him as a licensed wag, stood his ground, ducking his head with a facetious grin whenever the master made a dive at him.

"Lor, mas'r, 'tan't us—we's regular stiddy; it's these yer new hands; they's real aggravatin'—kinder pickin' at us, all time!"

The keeper at this turned upon Tom and Adolph, and distributed a few kicks and cuffs without much inquiry, and leaving general orders for all to be good boys and go to sleep, left the apartment.

While this scene was going on in the men's sleeping-room the reader may be curious to take a peep at the corresponding apartment allotted to the women. Stretched out in various attitudes over the floor, he may see numberless sleeping forms of every shade of complexion, from the purest ebony to white, and of all years, from childhood to old age, lying now asleep. Here is a fine, bright girl of ten years, whose mother was sold out yesterday, and who to-night cried herself to sleep when nobody was looking at her. Here, a worn old negress, whose thin arms and callous fingers tell of hard toil, waiting to be sold to-morrow, as a cast-off article, for what can be got for her; and some forty or fifty others, with heads variously enveloped in blankets or articles of clothing, lie stretched around them. But, in a corner, sitting apart from the rest, are two females of a more interesting appearance than common. One of these is a respectably-dressed mulatto woman, between forty and fifty, with soft eyes and a gentle and pleasing

physically. She has on her head a high-raised turban, made of a gay red Madras handkerchief, of the first quality, and her dress is neatly fitted, and of good material, showing that she had been provided for with a careful hand. By her side, and nestling closely to her, is a young girl of fifteen, her daughter. She is a quadroon, as may be seen from her fairer complexion, though her likeness to her mother is quite discernible. She has the same soft, dark eye, with longer lashes, and her curling hair is of a luxuriant brown.

These two, whom we shall call Susan and Emmeline, had been the personal attendants of an amiable and pious lady of New Orleans, by whom they had been carefully and piously instructed and trained. They had been taught to read and write, diligently instructed in the truths of religion, and their lot had been as happy a one as in their condition it was possible to be. But the only son of their protectress had the management of her property; and, by carelessness and extravagance, involved it to a large amount, and at last failed.

Both are weeping, but each quietly, that the other may not hear.

"Mother, just lay your head on my lap, and see if you can't sleep a little," says the girl, trying to appear calm.

"I haven't any heart to sleep, Em! I can't! It's the last night we may be together!"

"O mother, don't say so! Perhaps we shall get sold together—who knows?"

"If 'twas anybody else's case I should say so too, Em," said the woman; "but I'm so 'feared of losin' you that I don't see anything but the danger."

"Why, mother? The man said we were both likely, and would sell well."

Susan remembered the man's looks and words. With a deadly sickness at her heart she remembered how he had looked at Emmeline's hands, and lifted up her curly hair and pronounced her a first-rate article. Susan had been trained as a Christian, brought up in the daily reading of the Bible, and had the same horror of her child's being sold to a life of shame that any other Christian mother might have; but she had no hope—no protection.

"Mother, I think we might do first-rate, if you could get a

place as cook and I as chambermaid or sempstress, ... some family. I dare say we shall. Let's both look as bright and lively as we can, and tell all we can do, and perhaps we shall," said Emmeline.

"I want you to brush your hair all back straight to-morrow," said Susan.

"What for, mother? I don't look near so well that way."

"Yes; but you'll sell better so."

"I don't see why!" said the child.

"Respectable families would be more apt to buy you if they saw you looked plain and decent, as if you wasn't trying to look handsome. I know their ways better'n you do," said Susan.

"Well, mother, then I will."

"And, Emmeline, if we shouldn't ever see each other again after to-morrow—if I'm sold way up on a plantation somewhere, and you somewhere else—always remember how you've been brought up, and all missis has told you. Take your Bible with you, and your hymn-book; and if you're faithful to the Lord, He'll be faithful to you."

So speaks the poor soul in sore discouragement; for she knows that to-morrow, any man, however vile and brutal, however godless and merciless, if he has only money to pay for her, may become owner of her daughter, body and soul; and then how is the child to be faithful? She thinks of all this as she holds her daughter in her arms, and wishes that she were not so handsome and attractive. It seems almost an aggravation to her to remember how purely and piously, how much above the ordinary lot she has been brought up. But she has no resort but to *pray;* and many such prayers to God have gone up from those same trim, neatly-arranged, respectable slave-prisons—prayers which God has not forgotten, as a coming day shall show; for it is written, "Whoso causeth one of these little ones to offend, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

But now it is morning, and everybody is astir; and the worthy Mr. Skeggs is busy and bright, for a lot of goods is to be fitted out for auction. There is a brisk look-out on the toilet; injunctions passed around to every one to put on

their best face and be spry; and now all are arranged in a circle for a last review, before they are marched up to the Bourse.

Mr. Skeggs, with his palmetto on and his cigar in his mouth, walks round to put farewell touches on his wares.

"How's this?" he said, stepping in front of Susan and Emmeline. "Where's your curls, gal?"

The girl looked timidly at her mother, who, with the smooth adroitness common among her class, answers:

"I was telling her last night to put her hair smooth and neat, and not having it flying about in curls—looks more respectable so!"

"Bother!" said the man peremptorily, turning to the girl. "You go right long, and curl yourself real smart?" he added, giving a crack to a ratten he held in his hand; "and be back in quick time, too! You go and help her," he added to the mother. "Them curls may make a hundred dollars' difference in the sale of her."

* * * * *

Beneath a splendid dome were men of all nations, moving to and fro over the marble pave. On every side of the circular area were little tribunes, or stations, for the use of speakers and auctioneers. Two of these, on opposite sides of the area, were now occupied by brilliant and talented gentlemen, enthusiastically forcing up, in English and French commingled, the bids of connoisseurs in their various wares. A third one, on the other side, still unoccupied, was surrounded by a group waiting the moment of sale to begin. And here we may recognise the St. Clare servants, Tom, Adolph, and others; and there, too, Susan and Emmeline, awaiting their turn with anxious and dejected faces. Various spectators, intending to purchase or not intending, as the case might be, gathered around the group, handling, examining and commenting on their various points and faces with the same freedom that a set of jockeys discuss the merits of a horse.

"Hulloa, Alf! What brings you here?" said a young exquisite, slapping the shoulder of a sprucely-dressed young man, who was examining Adolph through an eye-glass.

"Well, I was wanting a valet, and I heard that St. Clare's lot was going. I thought I'd just have a look at his."

"Catch me ever buying any of St. Clare's people! Spoilt niggers, every one! Impudent as the devil!" said the other.

"Never fear that!" said the first. "If I get 'em, I'll soon have their airs out of them; they'll soon find that they've another kind of master to deal with than Monsieur St. Clare. 'Pon my word, I'll buy that fellow. I like the shape of him."

"You'll find it'll take all you've got to keep him. He's deucedly extravagant!"

"Yes, but my lord will find that he *can't* be extravagant, with *me*. Just let him be sent to the calaboose a few times, and thoroughly dressed down! I'll tell you if it don't bring him to a sense of his ways! Oh, I'll reform him, up hill and down—you'll see! I buy him, that's flat!"

Tom had been standing wistfully examining the multitude of faces thronging around him for one whom he would wish to call master; and, if you should ever be under the necessity, sir, of selecting out of two hundred men one who was to become your absolute owner and disposer, you would perhaps realise, just as Tom did, how few there were that you would feel at all comfortable in being made over to. Tom saw abundance of men—great, burly, gruff men; little chirping, dried men; long-favoured, lank, hard men; and every variety of stubbed-looking, commonplace men, who pick up their fellow-men as one picks up chips, putting them into the fire or a basket with equal unconcern, according to their convenience; but he saw no St. Clare.

A little before the sale commenced, a short, broad, muscular man, in a checked shirt, considerably open at the bosom, and pantaloons much the worse for dirt and wear, elbowed his way through the crowd, like one who is going actively into a business; and, coming up to the group, began to examine them systematically. From the moment that Tom saw him approaching, he felt an immediate and revolting horror at him, that increased as he came near. He was evidently, though short, of gigantic strength. His round, bullet head, large light-grey eyes, with their shaggy, sandy eyebrows, and stiff, wiry, sun-burned hair,

were rather unprepossessing items, it is to be confessed; his large, coarse mouth was distended with tobacco, the juice of which, from time to time, he ejected from him with great decision and explosive force; his hands were immensely large, hairy, sun-burned, freckled, and very dirty, and garnished with long nails, in a very foul condition. This man proceeded to a very free personal examination of the lot. He seized Tom by the jaw, and pulled open his mouth to inspect his teeth; made him strip up his sleeves, to show his muscle; turned him round, made him jump and spring, to show his paces.

"Where was you raised?" he added briefly to these investigations.

"In Kentuck, mas'r," said Tom, looking about as if for deliverance.

"What have you done?"

"Had care of mas'r's farm," said Tom.

"Likely story!" said the other shortly, as he passed on. He paused a moment before Adolph; then spitting a discharge of tobacco-juice on his well-blacked boots, and giving a contemptuous umph, he walked on. Again he stopped before Susan and Emmeline. He put out his heavy, dirty hand, and drew the girl towards him; passed it over her neck and bust, felt her arms, looked at her teeth, and then pushed her back against her mother, whose patient face showed the suffering she had been going through at every motion of the hideous stranger.

The girl was frightened and began to cry.

"Stop that, you minx!" said the salesman; "no whimpering here, the sale is going to begin." And accordingly the sale began.

Adolph was knocked off at a good sum to the young gentleman who had previously stated his intention of buying him; and the other servants of the St. Clare lot went to various bidders.

"Now, up with you, boy! D'ye hear?" said the auctioneer to Tom.

Tom stepped upon the block, gave a few anxious looks round; all seemed mingled in a common indistinct noise—the clatter of the salesman crying off his qualifications in French and English, the quick fire of French and English

bids: and almost in a moment came the final thump of the hammer, and the clear ring on the last syllable of the word "*dollars*," as the auctioneer announced his price, and Tom was made over. He had a master!

He was pushed from the block; the short, bull-headed man, seizing him roughly by the shoulder, pushed him to one side, saying, in a harsh voice, "Stand there, *you!*"

Tom hardly realised anything; but still the bidding went on—rattling, clattering, now French, now English. Down goes the hammer again—Susan is sold. She does down from the block, stops, looks wistfully back; her daughter stretches her hands towards her. She looks with agony in the face of the man who has bought her—a respectable, middle-aged man of benevolent countenance.

"O mas'r, please do buy my daughter!"

"I'd like to, but I'm afraid I can't afford it!" said the gentleman, looking with painful interest as the young girl mounted the block, and looked around her with a frightened and timid glance.

The blood flushes painfully in her otherwise colourless cheek, her eye has a feverish fire, and her mother groans to see that she looks more beautiful than she ever saw her before. The auctioneer sees his advantage, and expiates volubly in mingled French and English, and bids rise in rapid succession.

"I'll do anything in reason," said the benevolent-looking gentleman, pressing in and joining with the bids. In a few moments they have run beyond his purse. He is silent; the auctioneer grows warmer; but bids gradually drop off. It lies now between an aristocratic old citizen and our bullet-headed acquaintance. The citizen bids for a few turns, contemptuously measuring his opponent; but the bullet-head has the advantage over him, both in obstinacy and concealed length of purse, and the controversy lasts but a moment; the hammer falls—he has got the girl body and soul, unless God help her!

Her master is Mr. Legree, who owns a cotton-plantation on the Red River. She is pushed along in the same lot with Tom and two other men, and goes off, weeping as she goes.

The benevolent gentleman is sorry; but then the thing happens every day! One sees girls and mothers crying at these sales *always!* It can't be helped, etc.; and he walks off with his acquisition in another direction.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

On the lower part of a small, mean boat, on the Red River, Tom sat—chains on his wrists, chains on his feet, and a weight heavier than chains lay on his heart. All had faded from the sky—moon and stars—all had passed by him, as the trees and banks were now passing, to return no more. Kentucky home, with wife and children, and indulgent owners; St. Clare home, with all its refinements and splendours; the golden head of Eva, with its saint-like eyes; the proud, gay, handsome, seemingly careless, yet ever-kind St. Clare; hours of ease and indulgent leisure—all gone! and in place thereof, *what* remains?

Mr. Simon Legree, Tom's master, had purchased slaves at one place and another, in New Orleans, to the number of eight, and driven them, handcuffed, in couples of two and two, down to the good steamer *Pirate*, which lay at the levee, ready for a trip up the Red River.

Having got them fairly on board, and the boat being off, he came round, with that air of efficiency which ever characterised him, to take a review of them. Stopping opposite to Tom, who had been attired for sale in his best broadcloth suit, with well-starched linen and shining boots, he briefly expressed himself as follows:

"Stand up!"

Tom stood up.

"Take off that stock!" and as Tom, encumbered by his fetters, proceeded to do it, he assisted him by pulling it, with no gentle hand, from his neck, and putting it in his pocket.

Legree now turned to Tom's trunk, which, previous to this, he had been ransacking, and taking from it a pair of old pantaloons and a dilapidated coat, which Tom had

been wont to put on about his stable-work, he said, liberating Tom's hands from the handcuffs, and pointing to a recess in among the boxes :

" You go there, and put these on."

Tom obeyed, and in a few moments returned.

" Take off your boots," said Mr. Legree.

Tom did so.

" There," said the former, throwing him a pair of coarse, stout shoes, such as were common among the slaves, " put these on."

In Tom's hurried exchange he had not forgotten to transfer his cherished Bible to his pocket. It was well he did so ; for Mr. Legree, having refitted Tom's handcuffs, proceeded deliberately to investigate the contents of his pockets He drew out a silk handkerchief, and put it into his own pocket. Several little trifles, which Tom had treasured, chiefly because they had amused Eva, he looked upon with a contemptuous grunt, and tossed them over his shoulder into the river.

Tom's Methodist hymn-book, which, in his hurry, he had forgotten, he now held up and turned over.

" Humph ! pious, to be sure ! So, what's yer name, you belong to the Church, eh ? "

" Yes, mas'r," said Tom firmly.

" Well, I'll soon have *that* out of you. I have none o' yer bawling, praying, singing niggers on my place ; so remember. Now, mind yourself," he said, with a stamp and a fierce glance of his grey eye, directed at Tom, " *I'm* your Church now ! You understand—you've got to be as *I* say."

Something within the silent black man answered *No !* and, as if repeated by an invisible voice, came the words of an old prophetic scroll, as Eva had often read them to him—" Fear not : for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by My name, thou art MINE ! "

But Simon Legree heard no voice. That voice is one he never shall hear. He only glared for a moment on the downcast face of Tom, and walked off. He took Tom's trunk, which contained a very neat and abundant wardrobe, to the forecastle, where it was soon surrounded byvarious hands of the boat. With much laughing at the expense of niggers who tried to be gentlemen, the articles very readily

were sold to one and another, and the empty trunk finally put up at auction. It was a good joke, they all thought, especially to see how Tom looked after his things, as they were going this way and that; and then the auction of the trunk, that was funnier than all, and occasioned abundant witticisms.

This little affair being over, Simon sauntered up again to his property.

"Now, Tom, I've relieved you of any extra baggage, you see. Take mighty good care of them clothes. It'll be long enough before you get more. I go in for making niggers careful; one suit has to do for one year on my place."

Simon next walked up to the place where Emmeline was sitting, chained to another woman.

"Well, my dear," he said, chucking her under the chin, "keep up your spirits."

The involuntary look of horror, fright, and aversion with which the girl regarded him did not escape his eye. He frowned fiercely.

"None o' your shines, gal! You's got to keep a pleasant face when I speak to ye—d'ye hear? And you, you old yellow poco moonshine!" he said, giving a shove to the mulatto woman to whom Emmeline was chained, "don't you carry that sort of face! You's got to look chipper, I tell ye!"

"I say, all on ye," he said, retreating a pace or two back, "look at me—look at me—look me right in the eye! *Straight*, now!" said he, stamping his foot at every pause.

As by a fascination, every eye was now directed to the glaring, greenish-grey eye of Simon.

"Now," said he, doubling his great heavy fist into something resembling a blacksmith's hammer, "d'ye see this fist? Heft it!" he said, bringing it down on Tom's hand. "Look at these yer bones! Well, I tell ye, this yer fist has got as hard as iron *knocking down niggers*. I never see the nigger yet I couldn't bring down with one crack," said he, bringing his fist down so near to the face of Tom that he winked and drew back. "I don't keep none o' yer cussed overseers; I does my own overseeing; and I tell you things *is* seen to. You's every one of ye got to toe the mark, I tell ye, quick—straight—the moment I speak.

That's the way to keep in with me. You won't find no soft spot in me nowhere. So now, mind yerselves; for I don't show no mercy!"

The women involuntarily drew in her breath, and the whole gang sat with downcast, dejected faces. Meanwhile Simon turned on his heel, and marched up to the bar of the boat for a dram.

A conversation started between Emmeline and the mulatto woman with whom she was confined. As was natural, they were exchanging with each other some particulars of their history.

"Who did you belong to?" said Emmeline.

"Well, my mas'r was Mr. Ellis—lived on Levee Street. P'raps you've seen the house."

"Was he good to you?" said Emmeline.

"Mostly, till he tuk sick. He's lain sick, off and on, more than six months, and been orful oneasy. 'Pears like he warnt willin' to have nobody rest, day or night; and got so cur'ous there couldn't nobody suit him. 'Pears like he just grew crosser every day; kept me up nights till I got fairly beat out, and couldn't keep awake no longer; and 'cause I got to sleep, one night—lors, he talk so orful to me, and he tell me he'd sell me to just the hardest master he could find; and he'd promised me my freedom, too, when he died."

"Had you any friends?" said Emmeline.

"Yes, my husband—he's a blacksmith. Mas'r gen'ly hired him out. They took me off so quick, I didn't even have time to see him; and I'd got four children. Oh, dear me!" said the woman, covering her face with her hands.

It is a natural impulse with every one, when they hear a tale of distress, to think of something to say by way of consolation. Emmeline wanted to say something, but she could not think of anything to say. What was there to be said? As by a common assent, they both avoided, with fear and dread, all mention of the horrible man who was now their master.

True, there is religious trust for even the darkest hour. The mulatto woman was a member of the Methodist Church, and had an unenlightened but very sincere spirit of piety.

Emmeline had been educated much more intelligently—taught to read and write, and diligently instructed in the Bible, by the care of a faithful and pious mistress; yet, would it not try the faith of the firmest Christian, to find themselves abandoned, apparently, of God, in the grasp of ruthless violence? How much more must it shake the faith of Christ's poor little ones, weak in knowledge and tender in years!

The boat moved on—freighted with its weight of sorrow—up the red, muddy, turbid current, through the abrupt, tortuous windings of the Red River; and sad eyes gazed wearily on the steep red-clay banks, as they glided by in dreary sameness. At last the boat stopped at a small town, and Legree with his party disembarked.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DARK PLACES.

TRAILING wearily behind a rude wagon, and over a ruder road, Tom and his associates faced onward.

In the wagon was seated Simon Legree; and the two women, still fettered together, were stowed away with some baggage in the back part of it, and the whole company were seeking Legree's plantation, which lay a good distance off.

It was a wild, forsaken road, now winding through dreary pine-barrens, where the wind whispered mournfully, and now over log causeways, through long cypress swamps, the doleful trees rising out of the slimp, spongy ground, hung with long wreaths of funereal black moss, while ever and anon the loathsome form of the mocassin snake might be seen gliding among broken stumps and shattered branches that lay here and there, rotting in the water.

It is disconsolate enough, this riding, to the stranger, who, with well-filled pocket and well-appointed horse, threads the lonely way on some errand of business; but wilder, drearier, to the man enthralled, whom every weary step bears farther from all that man loves and prays for.

So one should have thought that witnessed the sunken and dejected expression on those dark faces, the wistful, patient

weariness with which those sad eyes rested on object after object that passed them in their sad journey.

Simon rode on, however, apparently well pleased, occasionally pulling away at a flask of spirit, which he kept in his pocket.

"Well, my little dear," said he, turning to Emmeline, and laying his hand on her shoulder, "we're almost home!"

When Legree scolded and stormed, Emmeline was terrified; but when he laid his hand on her, and spoke as he now did, she felt as if she had rather he would strike her. The expression of his eyes made her soul sick, and her flesh creep. Involuntarily she clung closer to the mulatto woman by her side, as if she were her mother.

"You didn't ever wear ear-rings?" he said, taking hold of her small ear with his coarse fingers.

"No, mas'r!" said Emmeline, trembling and looking down.

"Well, I'll give you a pair when we get home, if you're a good girl. You needn't be so frightened; I don't mean to make you work very hard. You'll have fine times with me, and live like a lady—only be a good girl."

Legree had been drinking to that degree that he was inclining to be very gracious; and it was about this time that the enclosures of the plantation rose to view. The estate had formerly belonged to a gentleman of opulence and taste, who had bestowed some considerable attention to the adornment of his grounds. Having died insolvent, it had been purchased, at a bargain, by Legree, who used it, as he did everything else, merely as an implement for money-making. The place had that ragged, forlorn appearance which is always produced by the evidence that the care of the former owner has been left to go to utter decay.

What once was a smooth-shaven lawn before the house, dotted here and there with ornamental shrubs, was now covered with frowsy tangled grass, with horse-posts set up here and there in it, where the turf was stamped away, and the ground littered with broken pails, cobs of corn, and other slovenly remains. Here and there a mildewed jessamine or honeysuckle hung raggedly from some ornamental support, which had been pushed to one side by being used as a horse-post. What once was a large

garden was now all grown over with weeds, through which, here and there, some solitary exotic reared its forsaken head. What had been a conservatory had now no window-sashes, and on the mouldering shelves stood some dry forsaken flower-pots, with sticks in them, whose dried leaves showed they had once been plants.

The wagon rolled up a weedy gravel-walk, under a noble avenue of China trees, whose graceful forms and ever-springing foliage seemed to be the only things there that neglect could not daunt or alter—like noble spirits, so deeply rooted in goodness as to flourish and grow stronger amid discouragement and decay.

The house had been large and handsome. It was built in a manner common in the South : a wide verandah of two storeys running round every part of the house, into which every outer door opened, the lower tier being supported by brick pillars.

But the place looked desolate and uncomfortable ; some windows stopped up with boards, some with shattered panes, and shutters hanging by a single hinge—all telling of coarse neglect and discomfort.

Bits of board, straw, old decayed barrels and boxes, garnished the ground in all directions ; and three or four ferocious-looking dogs, roused by the sound of the wagon wheels, came tearing out, and were with difficulty restrained from laying hold of Tom and his companions, by the efforts of the ragged servants who came after them.

"Ye see what ye'd get!" said Legree, caressing the dogs with grim satisfaction, and turning to Tom and his companions. "Ye see what ye'd get if ye'd try to run off. These yer dogs has been raised to track niggers ; and they'd jest as soon chaw one on ye up as eat their supper. So mind yerself! How now, Sambo!" he said to a ragged fellow, without any brim to his hat, who was officious in his attentions. "How have things been going?"

"Fust rate, mas'r."

"Quimbo," said Legree to another, who was making zealous demonstrations to attract his attention, "ye minded what I telled ye?"

"Guess I did, didn't I?"

These two coloured men were the principal hands on

the plantation. Legree had trained them in savageness and brutality as systematically as he had his bulldogs; and, by long practice in hardness and cruelty, brought their whole nature to about the same range of capacities. It is a common remark, and one that is brought to militate strongly against the character of the race, that the negro overseer is always more tyrannical and cruel than the white one. This is simply saying that the negro mind has been more crushed and debased than the white. It is no more true of this race than of every oppressed race, the world over. The slave is always a tyrant, if he can get a chance to be one.

Legree, like some potentates we read of in history, governed his plantation by a sort of resolution of forces. Sambo and Quimbo cordially hated each other; the plantation-hands, one and all, cordially hated them; and by playing off one against another he was pretty sure, through one or the other of the three parties, to get informed of whatever was on foot in the place.

Nobody can live entirely without social intercourse; and Legree encouraged his two black satellites to a kind of coarse familiarity with him—a familiarity, however, at any moment liable to get one or the other of them into trouble; for, on the slightest provocation, one of them always stood ready, at a nod, to be a minister of his vengeance on the other.

As they stood there now by Legree, they seemed an apt illustration of the fact that brutal men are lower even than animals. Their coarse, dark, heavy features; their great eyes, rolling enviously on each other; their barbarous, guttural, half-brute intonation; their dilapidated garments fluttering in the wind—were all in admirable keeping with the vile and unwholesome character of everything about the place.

"Here, you Sambo," said Legree, "take these yer boys down to the quarters; and here's a gal I've got for *you*," said he, as he separated the mulatto woman from Emmeline, and pushed her towards him; "I promised to bring you one, you know."

The woman gave a sudden start, and, drawing back, said suddenly:

"O mas'r! I left my old man in New Orleans."

"What of that, you——? Won't you want one here? None o' your words—go 'long!" said Legree, raising his whip.

"Come, mistress," he said to Emmeline, "you go in here with me."

A dark, wild face was seen, for a moment, to glance at the window of the house; and, as Legree opened the door, a female voice said something in a quick imperative tone. Tom, who was looking, with anxious interest, after Emmeline, as she went in, noticed this, and heard Legree answer angrily, "You may hold your tongue! I'll do as I please for all you!"

Tom heard no more; for he was soon following Sambo to the quarters. The quarters was a little sort of street of rude shanties, in a row, in a part of the plantation far off from the house. They had a forlorn, brutal, forsaken air. Tom's heart sank when he saw them. He had been comforting himself with the thought of a cottage, rude, indeed, but one which he might make neat and quiet, and where he might have a shelf for his Bible, and a place to be alone out of his labouring hours. He looked into several; they were mere rude shells, destitute of any species of furniture, except a heap of straw, foul with dirt, spread confusedly over the floor, which was merely the bare ground, trodden hard by the tramping of innumerable feet.

"Which of these will be mine?" said he to Sambo submissively.

"Dunno; ken turn in here, I s'pose," said Sambo; "spect that's room for another thar. Thar's a pretty smart heap o' niggers to each on 'em, now; sure, I dunno what I's to do with more."

CHAPTER XXIX

CASSY

It took but a short time to familiarise Tom with all that was to be hoped or feared in his new way of life. He was an expert and efficient workman in whatever he undertook; and was both from habit and principle prompt and faithful.

Quiet and peaceable in his disposition, he hoped, by unremitting diligence, to avert from himself at least a portion of the evils of his condition. He saw enough of abuse and misery to make him sick and weary; but he determined to toil on with religious patience, committing himself to Him that judgeth righteously, not without hope that some way of escape might yet be opened to him.

Legree took silent note of Tom's availability. He rated him as a first-class hand; and yet he felt a secret dislike to him—the native antipathy of bad to good. He saw plainly that when, as was often the case, his violence and brutality fell on the helpless, Tom took notice of it; for, so subtle is the atmosphere of opinion, that it will make itself felt without words, and the opinion even of a slave may annoy a master. Tom in various ways manifested a tenderness of feeling, a commiseration for his fellow-sufferers, strange and new to them, which was watched with a jealous eye by Legree. He had purchased Tom with a view of eventually making him a sort of overseer, with whom he might at times entrust his affairs in short absences; and, in his view, the first, second, and third requisites for that place was *hardness*. Legree made up his mind that, as Tom was not hard to his hand, he would harden him forthwith; and some few weeks after Tom had been on the place he determined to commence the process.

One morning, when the hands were mustered for the field, Tom noticed with surprise a new-comer among them, whose appearance excited his attention. It was a woman, tall and slenderly formed, with remarkably delicate hands and feet, and dressed in neat and respectable garments. By the appearance of her face, she might have been between thirty-five and forty; and it was a face that, once seen, could never be forgotten—one of those that at a glance seem to convey to us an idea of a wild, painful, and romantic history. Her forehead was high, and her eyebrows marked with beautiful clearness. Her straight, well-formed nose, her finely-cut mouth, and the graceful contour of her head and neck, showed that she must once have been beautiful; but her face was deeply wrinkled with lines of pain, and of proud and bitter endurance. There was a fierce pride and defiance in every line of her face, in every curve of the

flexible lip, in every motion of her body; but in her eye was a deep, settled night of anguish—an expression so hopeless and unchanging as to contrast fearfully with the scorn and pride expressed by her whole demeanour.

Where she came from, or who she was, Tom did not know. The first he did know, she was walking by his side, erect and proud, in the dim grey of the dawn. To the gang, however, she was known; for there was much looking and turning of heads, and a smothered yet apparent exultation among the miserable, ragged, half-starved creatures by whom she was surrounded.

Tom was soon busy at his work; but, as the woman was at no great distance from him, he often glanced an eye to her, at her work. He saw at a glance that a native adroitness and handiness made the task to her an easier one than it proved to many. She picked very fast and very clean, and with an air of scorn, as if she despised both the work and the disgrace and humiliation of the circumstances in which she was placed.

In the course of the day, Tom was working with the mulatto woman who had been bought in the same lot with himself. She was evidently in a condition of great suffering, and Tom often heard her praying, as she wavered and trembled, and seemed about to fall down. Tom silently, as he came near to her, transferred several handfuls of cotton from his own sack to hers.

"Oh, don't, don't!" said the woman, looking surprised; "it'll get you in trouble."

Just then Sambo came up. He seemed to have a special spite against this woman; and, flourishing his whip, said, in brutal, guttural tones, "What dis yer, Luce—foolin', eh?" and, with a word, kicking the woman with his heavy cowhide shoe, he struck Tom across the face with his whip.

Tom silently resumed his task; but the woman, before at the last point of exhaustion, fainted.

"I'll bring her to!" said the driver, with a brutal grin. "I'll give her something better than camphire!" and, taking a pin from his coat sleeve, he buried it to the head in her flesh. The woman groaned and half rose. "Get up, you beast, and work, will ye, or I'll show yer a trick more!"

The woman seemed stimulated, for a few moments, to an unnatural strength, and worked with desperate eagerness.

"See that you keep to dat ar," said the man, "or yer'll wish yer's dead to-night, I reckin!"

"That I do now!" Tom heard her say; and again he heard her say, "O Lord, how long? O Lord, why don't you help us?"

At the risk of all that he might suffer, Tom came forward again, and put all the cotton in his sack into the woman's.

"Oh, you mustn't! you dunno what they'll do to ye!" said the woman.

"I can bar it," said Tom, "better'n you"; and he was at his place again. It passed in a moment.

Suddenly the stranger woman whom we have described, and who had, in the course of her work, come near enough to hear Tom's last words, raised her heavy black eyes, and fixed them for a second on him; then, taking a quantity of cotton from her basket, she placed it in his.

"You know nothing about this place," she said, "or you wouldn't have done that. When you've been here a month, you'll be done helping anybody; you'll find it hard enough to take care of your own skin."

But the action of the woman had been seen by the driver across the field; and, flourishing his whip, he came up to her.

"What! what!" he said to the woman, with an air of triumph, "you a-foolin'. Go along! yer under me now—mind yourself, or ye'll cotch it!"

A glance like sheet-lightning suddenly flashed from those black eyes; and, facing, with quivering lip and dilated nostrils, she drew herself up, and fixed a glance, blazing with rage and scorn, on the driver.

"Dog!" she said, "touch *me*, if you dare! I've power enough yet to have you torn by the dogs, burnt alive, cut to inches! I've only to say the word!"

"What de devil you here for, den?" said the man, evidently cowed, and sullenly retreating a step or two. "Didn't mean no harm, Misse Cassy!"

"Keep your distance, then!" said the woman. And, in truth, the man seemed greatly inclined to attend to something at the other end of the field, and started off in quick time.

The woman suddenly turned to her work, and laboured

with a dispatch that was perfectly astonishing to Tom. She seemed to work by magic. Before the day was through her basket was filled, crowded down, and piled, and she had several times put largely into Tom's. Long after dusk, the whole weary train, with their baskets on their heads, defiled up to the building appropriated to the storing and weighing the cotton. Legree was there, busily conversing with the two drivers.

"Dat ar Tom's gwine to make a powerful deal o' trouble; kept a-puttin' into Lucy's basket. One o' these yer dat will get all der niggers to feelin' bused, if mas'r don't watch him!" said Sambo.

"Hey-day! The black cuss!" said Legree. "He'll have to get a breakin' in, won't he, boys?"

Both negroes grinned a horrid grin at this intimation.

"Ay, ay! Let Mas'r Legree alone for breakin' in! De debil heself couldn't beat mas'r at dat!" said Quimbo.

"Wal, boys, the best way is to give him the flogging to do till he gets over his notions. Break him in!"

"Lord, mas'r' ll have hard work to get dat out o' him!"

"It'll have to come out of him, though!" said Legree, as he rolled his tobacco in his mouth.

"Now, dar's Lucy—de aggravatinest, ugliest wench on de place!" pursued Sambo.

"Take care, Sam; I shall begin to think what's the reason for your spite agin Lucy."

"Well, mas'r knows she sot herself up agin mas'r, and wouldn't have me when he telled her to."

"I'd a flogged her into't," said Legree, spitting, "only there's such a press o' work, it don't seem wuth a while to upset her jist now. She slender; but these yer slender gals will bear half killin' to get their own way!"

"Wal, Lucy was real aggravatin' and lazy, sulkin' round; wouldn't do nothin'; and Tom he tuck up for her."

"He did, eh? Wal, then, Tom shall have the pleasure of flogging her. It'll be a good practice for him, and he won't put it on to the gal like you devils, neither."

"Ho, ho! haw! haw! haw!" laughed both the sooty wretches; and the diabolical sounds seemed, in truth, a not unapt expression of the fiendish character which Legree gave them.

"Well, but, mas'r, Tom and Misse Cassy, and dey among 'em, filled Lucy's basket. I ruther guess der weight's in it, mas'r."

"*I do the weighing!*" said Legree emphatically.

Both the drivers again laughed their diabolic laugh.

"So!" he added, "Misse Cassy did her day's work."

"She picks like de debil and all his angels!"

"She's got 'em all in her, I believe!" said Legree; and, growling a brutal oath, he proceeded to the weighing-room.

* * * * *

Slowly the weary, dispirited creatures wound their way into the room, and, with crouching reluctance, presented their baskets to be weighed.

Legree noted on a slate, on the side of which was pasted a list of names, the amount.

Tom's basket was weighed and approved; and he looked with an anxious glance for the success of the woman he had befriended.

Tottering with weakness, she came forward, and delivered her basket. It was full weight, as Legree well perceived; but, affecting anger, he said:

"What, you lazy beast! short again! Stand aside; you'll catch it pretty soon!"

The woman gave a groan of utter despair, and sat down on a board.

The person who had been called Misse Cassy now came forward, and, with a haughty, negligent air, delivered her basket. As she delivered it, Legree looked in her eyes with a sneering yet inquiring glance.

She fixed her black eyes steadily on him, her lips moved slightly, and she said something in French. What it was, no one knew; but Legree's face became perfectly demoniacal in its expression as she spoke; he half raised his hand, as if to strike—a gesture which she regarded with fierce disdain, as she turned and walked away.

"And now," said Legree, "come here, you Tom. You see, I telled ye I didn't buy ye jest for the common work. I mean to promote ye, and make a driver of ye; and to-night ye may jest as well begin to get yer hand in. Now, ye jest take this yer gal and flog her; ye've seen enough on't to know how."

"I beg mas'r's pardon," said Tom; "hopes mas'r won't set me at that. It's what I an't used to—never did—and can't do, no way possible."

"Ye'll larn a pretty smart chance of things ye never did know, before I've done with ye!" said Legree, taking up a cowhide and striking Tom a heavy blow across the cheek, and following up the infliction by a shower of blows.

"There!" he said, as he stopped to rest; "now will ye tell me ye can't do it?"

"Yes, mas'r," said Tom, putting up his hand to wipe the blood that trickled down his face. "I'm willin' to work night and day, and work while there's life and breath in me; but this yer thing I can't feel it right to do; and, mas'r, I *never* shall do it—*never!*"

Tom had a remarkably smooth, soft voice, and an habitually respectful manner, that had given Legree an idea that he would be cowardly, and easily subdued. When he spoke these last words, a thrill of amazement went through every one; the poor woman clasped her hands and said, "O Lord!" and every one involuntarily looked at each other and drew in their breath, as if to prepare for the storm about to burst.

Legree looked stupefied and confounded; but at last burst forth.

"What! ye blasted black beast! tell *me* ye don't think it *right* to do what I tell ye! What have any of you cussed cattle to do with thinking what's right? I'll put a stop to it! Why, what do ye think ye are? Maybe ye think yer a gentleman, Master Tom, to be a-telling your master what's right, and what an't! So you pretend it's wrong to flog the gal!"

"I think so, mas'r," said Tom. "The poor critter's sick and feeble; 'twould be downright cruel, and it's what I never will do, nor begin to. Mas'r, if you mean to kill me, kill me; but as to my raising my hand agin anyone here, I never shall—I'll die first!"

Tom spoke in a mild voice, but with a decision that could not be mistaken. Legree shook with anger; his greenish eyes glared fiercely, and his very whiskers seemed to curl with passion; but, like some ferocious beast that plays with its victim before he devours it, he kept back his strong

impulse to proceed to immediate violence, and broke out into bitter raillery.

"Well, here's a pious dog, at last, let down among us sinners—a saint, a gentleman, and no less, to talk to us sinners about our sins! Powerful holy critter he must be! Here, you rascal, you make believe to be so pious—didn't you never hear, out of yer Bible, 'Servants, obey your masters'? An't I your master? Didn't I pay down twelve hundred dollars, cash, for all there is in yer old cussed black shell? An't yer mine, now, body and soul?" he said, giving Tom a violent kick with his heavy boot. "Tell me!"

In the very depth of physical suffering, bowed by brutal oppression, this question shot a gleam of joy and triumph through Tom's soul. He suddenly stretched himself up, and, looking earnestly to heaven, while the tears and blood that flowed down his face mingled, he exclaimed:

"No, no, no! My soul an't yours, mas'r! You haven't bought it—ye can't buy it! It's been bought and paid for by One that's able to keep it. No matter, no matter, you can't harm me!"

"I can't!" said Legree, with a sneer. "We'll see! Here, Sambo! Quimbo! give this dog such a breakin'-in as he won't get over this month!"

The two gigantic negroes that now laid hold of Tom, with fiendish exultation in their faces, might have formed no unapt personification of the powers of darkness. The poor woman screamed with apprehension, and all rose, as by a general impulse, as they dragged him unresisting from the place.

CHAPTER XXX

THE QUADROON'S STORY

It was late at night, and Tom lay groaning and bleeding alone, in an old forsaken room of the gin-house, among pieces of broken machinery, piles of damaged cotton, and other rubbish which had there accumulated.

The night was damp and close, and the thick air swarmed with myriads of mosquitoes, which increased the restless

torture of his wounds; whilst a burning thirst—a torture beyond all others—filled up the uttermost measure of physical anguish.

"O good Lord! *Do* look down—give me the victory—give me the victory over all," prayed poor Tom, in his anguish.

A footstep entered the room behind him, and the light of a lantern flashed on his eyes.

"Who's there? Oh, for the Lord's massy, please give me some water!"

The woman Cassy—for it was she—set down her lantern, and, pouring water from a bottle, raised his head, and gave him drink. Another and another cup was drained, with feverish eagerness.

"Drink all ye want," she said; "I knew how it would be. It isn't the first time I've been out in the night, carrying water to such as you."

"Thank you, missis," said Tom, when he had done drinking.

"Don't call me missis! I'm a miserable slave, like yourself—a lower one than you can ever be!" she said bitterly. "But now," said she, going to the door, and dragging in a small palliasse, over which she had spread linen cloths wet with cold water, "try, my poor fellow, to roll yourself on to this."

Stiff with wounds and bruises, Tom was a long time in accomplishing this movement, but when done, he felt a sensible relief from the cooling application to his wounds.

The woman, whom long practice with the victims of brutality had made familiar with many healing arts, went on to make many applications to Tom's wounds, by means of which he was soon somewhat relieved.

"Now," said the woman, when she had raised his head on a roll of damaged cotton, which served for a pillow, "there's the best I can do for you."

Tom thanked her; and the woman, sitting down on the floor, drew up her knees, and, embracing them with her arms, looked fixedly before her, with a bitter and painful expression of countenance. Her bonnet fell back, and long wavy streams of black hair fell around her singular and melancholy face.

"It's no use, my poor fellow!" she broke out at last; "it's of no use, this you've been trying to do. You were a brave fellow—you had the right on your side; but it's all in vain and out of the question for you to struggle. You are in the devil's hands; he is the strongest, and you must give up."

Give up! and had not human weakness and physical agony whispered that before? Tom started; for the bitter woman, with her wild eyes and melancholy voice, seemed to him an embodiment of the temptation with which he had been wrestling.

"O Lord! O Lord!" he groaned, "how can I give up?"

"There's no use in calling on the Lord—He never hears," said the woman steadily. "There isn't any God, I believe; or, if there is, He's taken sides against us. All goes against us, heaven and earth. Everything is pushing us into hell. Why shouldn't we go?"

Tom closed his eyes, and shuddered at the dark, atheistic words.

"You see," said the woman, "*you* don't know anything about it—I do. I've been in this place five years, body and soul, under this man's foot; and I hate him as I do the devil! Here you are, on a lone plantation, ten miles from any other, in the swamps; not a white person here who could testify if you were burned alive—if you were scalded, cut in inch-pieces, set up for the dogs to tear, or hung up and whipped to death. There's no law here, of God or man, that can do you or any one of us the least good; and this man! there's no earthly thing that he's too good to do. I could make anyone's hair rise, and their teeth chatter, if I should tell what I've seen and been knowing here—and it's no use resisting! Did I *want* to live with him? Wasn't I a woman delicately bred? and he—God in heaven! what was he and is he? And yet I've lived with him these five years, and cursed every moment of my life—night and day! And now he's got a new one—a young thing, only fifteen; and she brought up, she says, piously. Her good mistress taught her to read the Bible, and she's brought her Bible here—to hell with her!" And the woman laughed a wild and doleful laugh, that

rang with a strange supernatural sound through the old ruined shed.

Tom folded his hands; all was darkness and horror.

"O Jesus! Lord Jesus! have you quite forgot us poor critters?" burst forth at last. "Help, Lord, I perish!"

The woman sternly continued:

"And what are these miserable low dogs you work with, that you should suffer on their account? Every one of them would turn against you the first time they got a chance. They are all of 'em as low and cruel to each other as they can be; there's no use in your suffering to keep from hurting them."

"Poor critters!" said Tom, "what made 'em cruel? And if I give out I shall get used to't, and grow, little by little, just like 'em! No, no, missis! I've lost everything—wife, and children, and home, and a kind mas'r—and he would have set me free, if he's only lived a week longer. I've lost everything in *this* world, and it's clean gone for ever—and now I *can't* lose heaven, too! No, I can't get to be wicked, besides all!"

"But it can't be that the Lord will lay sin to our account," said the woman; "He won't charge it to us, when we're forced to it; He'll charge it to them that drove us to it."

"Yes," said Tom, "but that won't keep us from growing wicked. If I get to be as hard-hearted as that ar Sambo, and as wicked, it won't make much odds to me how I come so; it's the *bein'* so—that ar's what I'm a-dreadin'."

The woman suddenly rose up, with her face composed to its usual stern, melancholy expression.

"Please, missis, I saw 'em throw my coat in that ar' corner, and in my coat-pocket is my Bible—if missis would please get it for me."

Cassy went and got it. Tom opened at once to a heavily-marked passage, much worn, of the last scenes in the life of Him by whose stripes we are healed.

"If missis would only be so good as read that ar—it's better than water."

Cassy took the book with a dry, proud air, and looked over the passage. She then read aloud, in a soft voice, and with a beauty of intonation that was peculiar, that touching account of anguish and of glory. Often, as she read, her

voice faltered, and sometimes failed altogether, when she would stop, with an air of frigid composure, till she had mastered herself. When she came to the touching words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," she threw down the book, and burying her face in the heavy masses of her hair, she sobbed aloud, with a convulsive violence.

Tom was weeping also, and occasionally uttering a smothered ejaculation.

"If we only could keep up that ar!" said Tom; "it seemed to come so natural to Him, and we have to fight so hard for't! O Lord, help us! Oh, blessed Lord Jesus, do help us!"

"Missis," said Tom, after awhile. "I can see that somehow you're quite 'bove me in everything; but there's one thing missis might learn even from poor Tom. Ye said the Lord took sides against us, because He lets us be 'bused and knocked round; but ye see what come on His own Son—the blessed Lord of Glory. Sufferin' an't no reason to make us think the Lord's turned agin us, but jest the contrary, if we only hold on to Him, and doesn't give up to sin."

"But why does He put us where we can't help but sin?" said the woman.

"I think we *can* help it," said Tom.

"You'll see," said Cassy. "What'll you do? To-morrow they'll be at you again. I know 'em—I have seen all their doings; I can't bear to think of all they'll bring you to—and they'll make you give out at last."

"Lord Jesus!" said Tom; "you *will* take care of my soul? O Lord, do!—don't let me give out!"

"Oh, dear," said Cassy, "I've heard all this crying and praying before; and yet they've been broken down and brought under. There's Emmeline, she's trying to hold on, and you're trying—but what use? You must give up, or be killed by inches."

"Well, then, I *will* die!" said Tom. "Spin it out as long as they can, they can't help my dying some time!—and after that they can't do no more. I'm clar! I'm set! I *know* the Lord'll help me, and bring me through."

The woman did not answer; she sat with her black eyes intently fixed on the floor.

"Maybe it's the way," she murmured to herself; "but those that *have* given up, there's no hope for them—none! We live in filth and grow loathsome, till we loathe ourselves. And we long to die, and we don't dare to kill ourselves! No hope! no hope! no hope!—this girl now—just as old as I was. You see me now," she said, speaking to Tom very rapidly, "see what I am! Well, I was brought up in luxury. The first I remember is playing about, when I was a child, in splendid parlours—when I was kept dressed up like a doll, and company and visitors used to praise me. There was a garden opening from the saloon windows; and there I used to play hide-and-go-seek, under the orange trees, with my brothers and sisters. I went to a convent, and there I learned music, French, embroidery, and what not; and when I was fourteen I came out to my father's funeral. He died very suddenly, and when the property came to be settled, they found that there was scarcely enough to cover the debts; and when the creditors took an inventory of the property, I was set down in it. My mother was a slave woman, and my father had always meant to set me free; but he had not done it, and so I was set down in the list. I'd always known who I was, but never thought much about it. Nobody ever expected that a strong healthy man is a-going to die. My father was a well man only four hours before he died—it was one of the first cholera cases in New Orleans. The day after the funeral my father's wife took her children, and went up to her father's plantation. I thought they treated me strangely, but didn't know. There was a young lawyer whom they left to settle the business; and he came every day, and was about the house, and spoke very politely to me. He brought with him one day a young man, whom I thought the handsomest I had ever seen. I shall never forget that evening. I walked with him in the garden. I was lonesome and full of sorrow, and he was so kind and gentle to me; and he told me that he had seen me before I went to the convent, and that he had loved me a great while, and that he would be my friend and protector. In short, though he didn't tell me, he had paid two thousand dollars for me, and I was his property, I became his willingly, for I loved him. Loved!" said the woman,

stopping; "oh, how I *did* love that man! How I love him now, and always shall while I breathe! He was so beautiful, so high, so noble! He put me into a beautiful house, with servants, horses, and carriages, and furniture, and dresses. Everything that money could buy he gave me; but I didn't set any value on all that; I only cared for him. I loved him better than my God and my own soul; and, if I tried, I couldn't do any other way than he wanted me to.

"I wanted only one thing—I wanted him to *marry* me. I thought if he loved me as he said he did, and if I was what he seemed to think I was, he would be willing to marry me and set me free. But he convinced me that it would be impossible; and he told me that, if we were only faithful to each other, it was marriage before God. If that it true, wasn't I that man's wife? Wasn't I faithful? For seven years didn't I study every look and motion, and only live and breathe to please him? We had two beautiful children. The first was a boy, and we called him Henry; he was the image of his father—he had such beautiful eyes, such a forehead, and his hair hung all in curls around it—and he had all his father's spirit and his talent too. Little Elsie, he said, looked like me. Oh, those were happy days! I thought I was as happy as anyone could be; but then there came evil times. He had a cousin, a Mr. Butler, come to New Orleans who was his particular friend—he thought all the world of him; but, from the first time I saw him, I couldn't tell why, I dreaded him, for I felt sure he was going to bring misery on us. He got Henry to go out with him, and often he would not come home nights till two or three o'clock. I did not dare say a word, for Henry was so high-spirited I was afraid to. He got him to the gaming-houses; and he was one of the sort that, when he once got a-going there, there was no holding back. And then he introduced him to another lady, and I saw soon that his heart was gone from me. He never told me, but I saw it—I knew it, day after day. I felt my heart breaking, but I could not say a word. At this the wretch offered to buy me and the children of Henry, to clear off his gambling debts, which stood in the way of his marrying as he wished—and *he sold us*. He told me one day that he had business

in the country and should be gone two or three weeks. He spoke kinder than usual, and said he should come back; but it didn't deceive me—I knew that the time had come. I was just like one turned into stone; I couldn't speak nor shed a tear. He kissed me and kissed the children a good many times and went out. I saw him get on his horse, and watched him till he was quite out of sight, and then I fell down and fainted.

"Then *he* came, the cursed wretch! he came to take possession. He told me that he had bought me and my children, and showed me the papers. I cursed him before God, and told him I'd die sooner than live with him.

"'Just as you please,' said he; 'but if you don't behave reasonably, I'll sell both the children, where you shall never see them again.'

"I gave up, for my hands were tied. He had my children; whenever I resisted his will anywhere, he would talk about selling them, and he made me as submissive as he desired. Oh, what a life it was! to live with my heart breaking, every day—to keep on, on, on loving, when it was only misery; and to be bound, body and soul, to one I hated. I used to love to read to Henry, to play to him, to waltz with him, and sing to him; but everything I did for this one was a perfect drag—yet I was afraid to refuse anything. He was very imperious and harsh to the children. Elsie was a timid little thing; but Henry was bold and high-spirited, like his father, and he had never been brought under in the least by anyone. He was always finding fault, and quarrelling with him; and I used to live in daily fear and dread. I tried to make the child respectful—I tried to keep them apart, for I held on to those children like death; but it did no good. *He sold both those children.* He took me to ride one day, and when I came home, they were nowhere to be found! He told me he had sold them; he showed me the money, the price of their blood.

"It seemed to me something in my head snapped at that moment. I felt dizzy and furious. I remember seeing a great sharp bowie-knife on the table! I remember something about catching it, and flying upon him; and then all grew dark, and I didn't know any more—not for days and days.

"When I came to myself, I was in a nice room—but not mine. An old black woman tended me, and a doctor came to see me, and there was a great deal of care taken of me. After a while I found that he had gone away, and left me at this house to be sold; and that's why they took such pains with me.

"At length, one day, came a gentleman named Stuart. He seemed to have some feeling for me; he saw that something dreadful was on my heart, and he came to see me alone a great many times, and finally persuaded me to tell him. He bought me at last, and promised to do all he could to find and buy back my children. He went to the hotel where my Henry was; they told him he had been sold to a planter up on Pearl River; that was the last that I ever heard. Then he found where my daughter was; an old woman was keeping her. He offered an immense sum for her; but they would not sell her. Butler found out that it was for me he wanted her; and he sent me word that I should never have her. Captain Stuart was very kind to me; he had a splendid plantation, and took me to it. In the course of a year I had a son born. Oh, that child!—how I loved it! How just like my poor Henry the little thing looked! But I had made up my mind—yes, I had, I would never again let a child live to grow up! I took the little fellow in my arms, when he was two weeks old, and kissed him, and cried over him; and then I gave him laudanum, and held him close to my bosom while he slept to death. How I mourned and cried over it! And who ever dreamed that it was anything but a mistake that had made me give it the laudanum? But it's one of the few things that I'm glad of now. I am not sorry to this day; he, at least, is out of pain. What better than death could I give him, poor child? After a while the cholera came, and Captain Stuart died; everybody died that wanted to live; and I—I, though I went down to death's door—*I lived!* Then I was sold, and passed from hand to hand, till I grew faded and wrinkled, and I had a fever; and then this wretch bought me, and brought me here—and here I am!"

The woman stopped. She had hurried on through her story with a wild, passionate utterance; sometimes seeming

to address it to Tom, and sometimes speaking as in a soliloquy. So vehement and overpowering was the force with which she spoke that, for a season, Tom was beguiled even from the pain of his wounds; and, raising himself on one elbow, watched her as she paced restlessly up and down, her long black hair swaying heavily about her as she moved.

"Can I do anything more for you, my poor fellow?" she said, approaching where Tom lay. "Shall I give you some more water?"

There was a graceful and compassionate sweetness in her voice and manner as she said this, that formed a strange contrast with her former wildness.

Tom drank the water and looked earnestly and pitifully into her face.

"O missis, I wish you'd go to Him that can give you living waters!"

"Go to Him! Where is He? Who is He?" said Cassy.

"Him that you read of to me—the Lord."

"I used to see the picture of Him over the altar, when I was a girl," said Cassy, her dark eyes fixing themselves in an expression of mournful reverie; "but *He isn't here!* There's nothing here but sin, and long, long despair! Oh!" She laid her hand on her breast and drew in her breath, as if to lift a heavy weight.

Tom looked as if he would speak again, but she cut him short with a decided gesture.

"Don't talk, my poor fellow. Try to sleep, if you can." And, placing water in his reach, and making whatever little arrangements for his comfort she could, Cassy left the shed.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TOKENS

THE sitting-room of Legree's establishment was a large, long room, with a wide, ample fireplace. It had once been hung with a showy and expensive paper, which now hung mouldering, torn and discoloured, from the damp walls.

The place had that peculiar sickening, unwholesome smell, compounded of mingled damp, dirt, and decay, which one often notices in close old houses. The wall-paper was defaced, in spots, by slops of beer and wine; or garnished with chalk memorandums, and long sums footed up, as if somebody had been practising arithmetic there. In the fireplace stood a brazier full of burning charcoal; for although the weather was not cold, the evenings always seemed damp and chilly in that great room; and Legree, moreover, wanted a place to light his cigars, and heat his water for punch. The ruddy glare of the charcoal displayed the confused and unpromising aspect of the room—saddles, bridles, several sorts of harness, riding-whips, overcoats, and various articles of clothing, scattered up and down the room in confused variety; and the dogs of which we have before spoken had encamped themselves among them, to suit their own taste and convenience.

Legree was just mixing himself a tumbler of punch, pouring his hot water from a cracked and broken-nosed pitcher, grumbling as he did so:

"Plague on that Sambo, to kick up this yer row between me and the new hands! That fellow won't be fit to work for a week now—right in the press of the season!"

"Yes, just like you," said a voice behind his chair. It was the woman Cassy who had stolen upon his soliloquy.

"Ha! you she-devil! you've come back, have you?"

"Yes, I have," she said coolly; "come to have my own way, too!"

"You lie, you jade! I'll be up to my word. Either behave yourself, or stay down to the quarters, and fare and work with the rest"

"I'd rather ten thousand times," said the woman, "live in the dirtiest hole at the quarters than be under your hoof!"

"But you *are* under my hoof, for all that," said he, turning upon her, with a savage grin; "that's one comfort. So sit down here on my knee, my dear, and hear to reason," said he, laying hold on her wrist.

"Simon Legree, take care!" said the woman, with a sharp flash of her eye, a glance so wild and insane in its light as to be almost appalling. "You're afraid of me,

Simon," she said deliberately, "and you've reason to be! But be careful, for I've got the devil in me!"

The last words were whispered in a hissing tone close to his ear.

"Get out! I believe, to my soul, you have!" said Legree, pushing her from him, and looking uncomfortably at her. "After all, Cassy," he said, "why can't you be friends with me as you used to?"

"Used to!" said she bitterly. She stopped short—a world of choking feelings, rising in her heart, kept her silent.

Cassy had always kept over Legree the kind of influence that a strong impassioned woman can ever keep over the most brutal man; but, of late, she had grown more and more irritable and restless under the hideous yoke of her servitude, and her irritability at times broke out into raving insanity; and this liability made her a sort of object of dread to Legree, who had that superstitious horror of insane persons which is common to coarse and uninstructed minds. When Legree brought Emmeline to the house, all the smouldering embers of womanly feeling flashed up in the worn heart of Cassy, and she took part with the girl; and a fierce quarrel ensued between her and Legree. Legree, in a fury, swore she should be put to field-service if she would not be peaceable. Cassy, with proud scorn, declared she *would* go to the field. And she worked there one day, as we have described, to show how perfectly she scorned the threat.

Legree was secretly uneasy all day, for Cassy had an influence over him from which he could not free himself. When she presented her basket at the scales, he had hoped for some concession, and addressed her in a sort of half-conciliatory, half-scornful tone; and she answered, with the bitterest contempt.

The outrageous treatment of poor Tom had roused her still more; and she had followed Legree to the house with no particular intention but to upbraid him for his brutality.

"I wish, Cassy," said Legree, "you'd behave yourself decently."

"*You* talk about behaving decently! And what have you been doing? You, who haven't even sense enough to

keep from spoiling one of your best hands, right in the most pressing season, just for your devilish temper!"

"I was a fool, it's a fact, to let any such brangle come up," said Legree; "but when the boy set up his will, he had to be broke in."

"I reckon you won't break *him* in!"

"Won't I?" said Legree, rising passionately. "I'd like to know if I won't? He'll be the first nigger that ever came round me! I'll break every bone in his body, but he *shall* give up!"

Just then the door opened, and Sambo entered. He came forward bowing, and holding out something in a paper.

"What's that, you dog?" said Legree.

"It's a witch thing, mas'r!"

"A what?"

"Something that niggers gets from witches. Keeps 'em from feelin' when they's flogged. He had it tied round his neck with a black string."

Legree, like most godless and cruel men, was superstitious. He took the paper and opened it uneasily.

There dropped out of it a silver dollar, and a long shining curl of fair hair—hair which, like a living thing, twined itself round Legree's fingers.

"Damnation!" he screamed, in sudden passion, stamping on the floor, and pulling furiously at the hair, as if it burned him. "Where did this come from? Take it off!—burn it up!—burn it up!" he screamed, tearing it off and throwing it into the charcoal. "What did you bring it to me for?"

Sambo stood with his heavy mouth wide open, and aghast with wonder; and Cassy, who was preparing to leave the apartment, stopped, and looked at him in perfect amazement.

"Don't you bring me any more of your devilish things!" said he, shaking his fist at Sambo, who retreated hastily toward the door; and picking up the silver dollar, he sent it smashing through the window-pane out into the darkness.

Sambo was glad to make his escape. When he was gone, Legree seemed a little ashamed of his fit of alarm. He sat doggedly down in his chair, and began sullenly sipping his tumbler of punch.

Cassy prepared herself for going out, unobserved by him;

and slipped away to minister to poor Tom, as we have already related. What was the matter with Legree? And what was there in a simple curl of fair hair to appal that brutal man, familiar with every form of cruelty? To answer this, we must carry the reader backward in his history. Hard and reprobate as the godless man seemed now, there had been a time when he had been rocked on the bosom of a mother—cradled with prayers and pious hymns—his now seared brow bedewed with the waters of holy baptism. In early childhood a fair-haired woman had led him, at the sound of Sabbath bell, to worship and to pray. Far in New England that mother had trained her only son with long, unwearied love and patient prayers. Born of a hard-tempered sire, on whom that gentle woman had wasted a world of unvalued love, Legree had followed in the steps of his father. Boisterous, unruly, and tyrannical, he despised all her counsel, and would have none of her reproof; and, at an early age, broke from her to seek his fortunes at sea. He never came home but once after; and then his mother, with the yearning of a heart that must love something, and has nothing else to love, clung to him, and sought, with passionate prayers and entreaties, to win him from a life of sin to his soul's eternal good.

That was Legree's day of grace. Then good angels called him; then he was almost persuaded, and Mercy held him by the hand. His heart relented—there was a conflict—but sin got the victory, and he set all the force of his rough nature against the conviction of his conscience. He drank and swore, when his mother, in the last agony of despair, knelt at his feet, he spurned her from him, threw her senseless on the floor, and, with brutal curses, fled to his ship. The next Legree heard of his mother was when one night, as he was carousing among drunken companions, a letter was put into his hand. He opened it, and a lock of long, curling hair fell from it, and twined about his fingers. The letter told him his mother was dead, and that, dying, she blessed and forgave him.

"Blast it!" said Legree to himself, as he sipped his liquor; "where did he get that? If it didn't look just like—whoo! I thought I'd forgot that. Curse me if I think there's any such thing as forgetting anything, anyhow

—hang it! I'm lonesome! I say," said Legree, stamping, and whistling to the dogs, "wake up, some of you, and keep me company!" but the dogs only opened one eye at him sleepily, and closed it again.

"I'll have Sambo and Quimbo up here to sing, and dance one of their hell-dances, and keep off these horrid notions," said Legree; and, putting on his hat, he went on to the verandah, and blew a horn, with which he commonly summoned his two sable drivers.

Legree was often wont, when in a gracious humour, to get these two worthies into his sitting-room, and, after warming them up with whisky, amuse himself by setting them to singing, dancing, or fighting, as the humour took him.

It was between one and two o'clock at night, as Cassy was returning from her ministrations to poor Tom, that she heard the sound of wild shrieking, whooping, hallooing, and singing from the sitting-room, mingled with the barking of dogs and other symptoms of general uproar.

She came up on the verandah steps, and looked in. Legree, and both the drivers, in a state of furious intoxication, were singing, whooping, upsetting chairs, and making all manner of ludicrous and horrid grimaces at each other.

She rested her small, slender hand on the window-blind, and looked fixedly at them. There was a world of anguish, scorn, and fierce bitterness in her black eyes as she did so. "Would it be a sin to rid the world of such a wretch?" she said to herself.

She turned hurriedly away, and, passing round to a back door, glided upstairs, and tapped at Emmeline's door.

CHAPTER XXXII

LEGREE TEMPORISES.

LEGREE, overcome with his carouse, sank to sleep in the sitting-room. He was not an habitual drunkard. His coarse, strong nature craved and could endure a continual stimulation, that would have utterly wrecked and crazed a finer one. But a deep underlying spirit of cautiousness

prevented his often yielding to appetite in such measure as to lose control of himself.

This night, however, in his feverish efforts to banish from his mind those fearful elements of woe and remorse which woke within him, he had indulged more than common; so that when he had discharged his sable attendants, he fell heavily on a settle in the room, and fell sound asleep.

Oh, how dares the bad soul to enter the shadowy world of sleep?—that land whose dim outlines lie so fearfully near to the mystic scene of retribution! Legree dreamed. In his heavy and feverish sleep a veiled form stood beside him, and laid a cold, soft hand upon him. He thought he knew who it was, and shuddered with creeping horror, though the face was veiled. Then he thought he felt *that hair* twining round his fingers; and then, that it slid smoothly round his neck, and tightened, and tightened, and he could not draw his breath; and then he thought voices *whispered* to him—whispers that chilled him with horror. Then it seemed to him he was on the edge of a frightful abyss, holding on and struggling in mortal fear, while dark hands stretched up, and were pulling him over; and Cassy came behind him laughing, and pushed him. And then rose up that solemn veiled figure and drew aside the veil. It was his mother; and she turned away from him, and he fell down, down, down, amidst a confused noise of shrieks and groans and shouts of demon laughter—and Legree awoke.

Calmly the rosy hue of dawn was stealing into the room. The morning star stood with its solemn, holy eye of light looking down on the man of sin, from out the brightened sky. Oh, with what freshness, what solemnity and beauty, is each new day born; as if to say to insensate men, "Behold! thou hast one more chance! *Strive* for immortal glory!" There is no speech nor language where this voice is not heard; but the bold, bad man heard it not. He woke with an oath and a curse. What to him was the gold and purple, the daily miracle of morning? What to him the sanctity of that star which the Son of God has hallowed as His own emblem? Brute-like, he saw without perceiving; and, stumbling forward, poured out a tumbler of brandy, and drank half of it.

"I've had a h—l of a night!" he said to Cassy, who just then entered from an opposite door.

"You'll get plenty of the same sort by and by," said she dryly.

"What do you mean, you minx?"

"You'll find out one of these days," returned Cassy, in the same tone. "Now, Simon, I've one piece of advice to give you."

"The devil you have!"

"My advice is," said Cassy steadily, as she began adjusting some things about the room, "that you let Tom alone."

"What business is't of yours?"

"What? To be sure, I don't know what it should be. If you want to pay twelve hundred for a fellow, and use him right up in the press of the season, just to serve your own spite, it's no business of mine. I've done what I could for him."

"You have? What business have you meddling in my matters?"

"None, to be sure. I've saved you some thousands of dollars at different times, by taking care of your hands—that's all the thanks I get. If your crop comes shorter into market than any of theirs, you won't lose your bet, I suppose? Tompkins won't lord it over you, I suppose; and you'll pay down your money like a lady, won't you? I think I see you doing it!"

Legree, like many other planters, had but one form of ambition—to have in the heaviest crop of the season; and he had several bets on this very present season pending in the next town. Cassy therefore, with a woman's tact, touched the only string that could be made to vibrate.

"Well, I'll let him off at what he's got," said Legree; "but he shall beg my pardon, and promise better fashions."

"That he won't do," said Cassy.

"Won't, eh?"

"No, he won't," said Cassy.

"I'd like to know *why*, mistress," said Legree, in the extreme of scorn.

"Because he's done right and he knows it, and won't say he's done wrong."

"Who a cuss cares what he knows? The nigger shall say what I please, or——"

"Or you'll lose your bet on the cotton-crop, by keeping him out of the field just at this very press."

"But he *will* give up, course he will; don't I know what niggers is? He'll beg like a dog this morning."

"He won't, Simon; you don't know this kind. You may kill him by inches, you won't get the first word of confession out of him."

"We'll see. Where is he?" said Legree, going out.

"In the waste-room of the gin-house," said Cassy.

Legree, though he talked so stoutly to Cassy, still sallied forth from the house with a degree of misgiving which was not common with him. His dreams of the past night, mingled with Cassy's prudential suggestions, considerably affected his mind. He resolved that nobody should be witness of his encounter with Tom, and determined, if he could not subdue him by bullying, to defer his vengeance to be wreaked in a more convenient season.

The solemn light of dawn, the angelic glory of the morning star, had looked in through the rude window of the shed where Tom was lying, and, as if descending on that star-beam came the solemn words, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." The mysterious warnings and intimations of Cassy, so far from discouraging his soul, in the end had roused it as with a heavenly call. He did not know but that the day of his death was dawning in the sky; and his heart throbbed with solemn throes of joy and desire, as he thought that the wondrous *all* of which he had often pondered, the great white throne, with its ever-radiant rainbow; the white-robed multitude, with voices as many waters; the crowns, the palms, the harps—might all break upon his vision before that sun should set again; and, therefore, without shuddering or trembling, he heard the voice of his persecutor as he drew near.

"Well, my boy," said Legree, with a contemptuous kick, "how do you find yourself? Didn't I tell yer I could larn yer a thing or two? How do yer like it, eh? How did yer whaling agree with yer, Tom? Ain't quite so crank as ye was last night? Ye couldn't treat a poor sinner now to a bit of a sermon, could yer, eh?"

Tom answered nothing.

"Get up, you beast!" said Legree, kicking him again.

This was a difficult matter for one so bruised and faint; and as Tom made efforts to do so, Legree laughed brutally.

"What makes ye so spry this morning, Tom? Cotched cold, maybe, last night?"

Tom by this time had gained his feet, and was confronting his master with a steady, unmoved front.

"The devil you can!" said Legree, looking at him. "I believe you haven't got enough yet. Now, Tom, get right down on yer knees and beg my pardon for yer shines last night." Tom did not move.

"Down, you dog!" said Legree, striking him with his riding-whip.

"Mas'r Legree," said Tom, "I can't do it. I did only what I thought was right. I shall do just so again, if ever the time comes. I never will do a cruel thing, come what may."

"Yes; but ye don't know what may come, Master Tom. Ye think what you've got is something. I tell you 'tan't anything—nothing 'tall. How would ye like to be tied to a tree, and have a slow fire lit up around ye? Wouldn't that be pleasant—eh, Tom?"

"Mas'r," said Tom, "I know ye can do dreadful things; but"—he stretched himself upward and clasped his hands—"but after ye've killed the body, there an't no more ye can do. And oh, there's all ETERNITY to come after that!"

ETERNITY—the word thrilled through the black man's soul with light and power as he spoke—it thrilled through the sinner's soul, too, like the bite of a scorpion. Legree gnashed on him with his teeth, but rage kept him silent; and Tom, like a man disenthralled, spoke in a clear and cheerful voice.

"Mas'r Legree, as ye bought me, I'll be a true and faithful servant to ye. I'll give ye all the work of my hands, all my time, all my strength; but my soul I won't give up to mortal man. I will hold on to the Lord, and put His commands before all, die or live, you may be sure on't. Mas'r Legree, I an't a grain afeared to die. I'd as soon die as not. Ye may whip me, starve me, burn me—it'll only send me sooner where I want to go."

"I'll make ye give out, though, 'fore I've done!" said Legree, in a rage.

"I shall have *help*," said Tom. "You'll never do it."

"Who the devil's going to help you?" said Legree scornfully.

"The Lord Almighty!" said Tom.

"D——n you!" said Legree, as with one blow of his fist he felled Tom to the earth.

A cold soft hand fell on Legree's at this moment. He turned—it was Cassy's; but the cold soft touch recalled his dream of the night before, and, flashing through the chambers of his brain, came all the fearful images of the night-watches, with a portion of the horror that accompanied them.

"Will you be a fool?" said Cassy in French. "Let him go! Let me alone to get him fit to be in the field again. Isn't it just as I told you?"

They say the alligator, the rhinoceros, though enclosed in bullet-proof mail, have each a spot where they are vulnerable; and fierce, reckless, unbelieving reprobates have commonly this point in superstitious dread.

Legree turned away, determined to let the point go for the time.

"Well, have it your own way," he said doggedly to Cassy.

"Hark ye!" he said to Tom, "I won't deal with ye now because the business is pressing, and I want all my hands; but I *never* forget. I'll score it against ye, and some time I'll have my pay out o' yer old black hide—mind ye!"

Legree turned, and went out.

"There you go," said Cassy, looking darkly after him; "your reckoning's to come yet! My poor fellow, how are you?"

"The Lord God hath sent His angel, and shut the lion's mouth for this time," said Tom.

"For this time, to be sure," said Cassy; "but now you've got his ill-will upon you to follow you, day in and day out, hanging like a dog on your throat, sucking your blood, bleeding away your life, drop by drop! I know the man!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

LIBERTY

A WHILE we must leave Tom in the hands of his persecutors, while we turn to pursue the fortunes of George and his wife, whom we left in friendly hands in a farmhouse on the roadside.

Tom Loker we left groaning and touzling in a most immaculately clean Quaker bed, under the motherly supervision of Aunt Dorcas, who found him to the full as tractable a patient as a sick bison.

Imagine a tall, dignified, spiritual woman, whose clear, muslin cap shades waves of silvery hair, parted on a broad, clear forehead, which overarches thoughtful grey eyes; a snowy handkerchief of lisse crape is folded neatly across her bosom; her glossy brown silk dress rustles peacefully as she glides up and down the chamber.

"The devil!" says Tom Loker, giving a great throw to the bed-clothes.

"I must request thee, Thomas, not to use such language," says Aunt Dorcas, as she quietly re-arranged the bed.

"Well, I won't granny, if I can help it," says Tom; "but it is enough to make a fellow swear, so cursedly hot!"

Dorcas removed a comforter from the bed, straightened the clothes again, and tucked them in till Tom looked something like a chrysalis, remarking, as she did so:

"I wish, friend, thee would leave off cursing and swearing and think upon thy ways."

"What the devil,' said Tom, "should I think of *them* for? Last thing ever *I* want to think of—hang it all!" And Tom flounced over, untucking and disarranging everything in a manner frightful to behold.

"That fellow and gal are here, I s'pose?" said he sullenly, after a pause.

"They are so," said Dorcas.

"They'd better be off up the lake," said Tom; "the quicker the better."

"Probably they will do so," said Aunt Dorcas, knitting peacefully.

"And hark ye," said Tom; "we've got correspondents in Sandusky that watch the boats for us. I don't care if I tell now. I hope they *will* get away, just to spite Marks—the cursed puppy!—d——n him!"

"Thomas!" said Dorcas.

"I tell you, granny, if you bottle a fellow up too tight, I shall split," said Tom. "But about the gal—tell 'em to dress her up some way so's to alter her. Her description's out in Sandusky."

"We will attend to that matter," said Dorcas, with characteristic composure.

As Tom had informed them their party would be looked for in Sandusky, it was thought prudent to divide them, Jim, with his old mother, was forwarded separately; and, a night or two after, George and Eliza, with their child, were driven privately into Sandusky, and lodged beneath an hospitable roof, preparatory to taking their last passage on the lake.

Their night was now far spent, and the morning star of liberty rose fair before them. Liberty! Electric word! What is it? Is there anything more in it than a name, a rhetorical flourish? What is freedom to that young man who sits there with his arms folded over his broad chest, the tint of African blood in his cheek, its dark fires in his eyes—what is freedom to George Harris? To him, it is the right of a man to be a man and not a brute; the right to call the wife of his bosom his wife, and to protect her from lawless violence; the right to protect and educate his child; the right to have a home of his own, a religion of his own, a character of his own, unsubject to the will of another. All these thoughts were rolling and seething in George's breast, as he was pensively leaning his head on his hand, watching his wife as she was adapting to her slender and pretty form the articles of man's attire, in which it was deemed safest she should make her escape.

"Now for it," said she, as she stood before the glass and shook down her silky abundance of black curly hair. "I say, George, it's almost a pity, isn't it?" she said, as she held up some of it playfully. "Pity it's all got to come off?"

George smiled sadly, and made no answer.

Eliza turned to the glass, and the scissors glittered as one long lock after another was detached from her head.

"There, now, that'll do," she said, taking up a hair-brush; "now for a few fancy touches."

"There, an't I a pretty young fellow?" she said, turning round to her husband, laughing and blushing at the same time.

"You always will be pretty, do what you will," said George.

"What does make you so sober?" said Eliza, kneeling on one knee and laying her hand on his. "We are only within twenty-four hours of Canada, they say. Only a day and a night on the lake, and then—oh, then!"

"O Eliza!" said George, drawing her towards him; "that is it! Now my fate is all narrowing down to a point. To come so near, to be almost in sight, and then lose all! I should never live under it, Eliza."

"Don't fear," said his wife hopefully. "The good Lord would not have brought us so far if He didn't mean to carry us through. I seem to feel Him with us, George."

"You are a blessed woman, Eliza!" said George, clasping her with a convulsive grasp. "But oh, tell me: can this great mercy be for us? Will these years and years of misery come to an end?—shall we be free?"

"I am sure of it, George," said Eliza, looking upwards, while tears of hope and enthusiasm shone on her long, dark lashes. "I feel it in me, that God is going to bring us out of bondage this very day."

"I will believe you, Eliza," said George, rising suddenly up. "I will believe. Come, let's be off. Well, indeed," said he, holding her off at arm's length, and looking admiringly at her, "you *are* a pretty fellow. That crop of little, short curls is quite becoming. Put on your cap. So—a little to one side. I never saw you look quite so pretty. But it's almost time for the carriage; I wonder if Mrs. Smyth has got Harry rigged?"

The door opened, and a respectable, middle-aged woman entered, leading little Harry, dressed in a girl's clothes.

"What a pretty girl he makes!" said Eliza, turning him round. "We call him Harriet, you see; doesn't the name

come nicely?" The child stood gravely regarding his mother in her new and strange attire, observing a profound silence, and occasionally drawing deep sighs, and peeping at her from under his dark curls.

"Does Harry know mamma?" said Eliza, stretching her hand towards him.

The child clung shyly to the woman.

"Come, Eliza, why do you try to coax him, when you know that he has got to be kept away from you?"

"I know it's foolish," said Eliza; "yet I can't bear to have him turn away from me. But come—where's my cloak? Here—how is it men put on cloaks, George?"

"You must wear it so," said her husband, throwing it over his shoulders.

"So, then," said Eliza, imitating the motion; "and I must stamp, and take long steps, and try to look saucy.

"Don't exert yourself," said George. "There is, now and then, a modest young man; and I think it would be easier for you to act that character."

"And these gloves! Mercy upon us!" said Eliza, "why my hands are lost in them."

"I advise you to keep them on pretty strictly," said George. "Your little slender paw might bring us all out. Now, Mrs. Smyth, you are to go under our charge, and be our aunty, you mind."

"I've heard," said Mrs. Smyth, "that there have been men down, warning all the packet-captains against a man and woman, with a little boy."

"They have!" said George. "Well, if we see any such people, we can tell them."

A hack now drove to the door, and the friendly family who had received the fugitives around them with farewell greetings.

The disguises the party had assumed were in accordance with the hints of Tom Loker. Mrs. Smyth, a respectable woman from the settlement of Canada, whither they were fleeing, being fortunately about crossing the lake to return thither, had consented to appear as the aunt of little Harry; and, in order to attach him to her, he had been allowed to remain, the last two days under her sole charge; and an extra amount of petting, joined to an indefinite amount of

seed-cakes and candy, had cemented a very close attachment on the part of the young gentleman.

The hack drove to the wharf. The two young men, as they appeared, walked up the plank into the boat, Eliza gallantly giving her arm to Mrs. Smyth, and George attending to their baggage. George was standing at the captain's office, settling for his party, when he overheard two men talking by his side.

"I've watched every one that came on board," said one, "and I know they're not on this boat."

The voice was that of the clerk of the boat. The speaker whom he addressed was our sometime friend Marks, who, with that valuable perseverance which characterised him, had come on to Sandusky, seeking whom he might devour.

"You would scarcely know the woman from a white one," said Marks. "The man is a very light mulatto. He has a brand in one of his hands."

The hand with which George was taking the tickets and change trembled a little; but he turned coolly around, fixed an unconcerned glance on the face of the speaker, and walked leisurely toward another part of the boat, where Eliza stood waiting for him.

Mrs. Smyth, with little Harry, sought the seclusion of the ladies' cabin, where the dark beauty of the supposed little girl drew many flattering comments from the passengers.

George had the satisfaction, as the bell rang out its farewell peal, to see Marks walk down the plank to the shore; and drew a long sigh of relief when the boat had put a returnless distance between them.

It was a superb day. The blue waves of Lake Erie danced rippling and sparkling in the sunlight. A fresh breeze blew from the shore, and the lordly boat ploughed her way right gallantly onward.

Oh, what an untold world there is in one human heart! Who thought, as George walked calmly up and down the deck of the steamer, with his shy companion at his side, of all that was burning in his bosom? The mighty good that seemed approaching seemed too good, too fair, even to be a reality; and he felt a jealous dread every moment of the day that something would rise to snatch it from him.

But the boat swept on—hours fleeted, and, at last, clear

and full rose the blessed English shore—shores charmed by a mighty spell—with one touch to dissolve every incantation of slavery, no matter in what language pronounced, or by what national power confirmed.

George and his wife stood arm in arm as the boat neared the small town of Amherstburg, in Canada. His breath grew thick and short; a mist gathered before his eyes; he silently pressed the little hand that lay, trembling on his arm. The bell rang—the boat stopped. Scarcely seeing what he did, he looked out his baggage, and gathered his little party. The little company were landed on the shore. They stood still till the boat had cleared; and then, with tears and embracings, the husband and wife, with their wondering child in their arms, knelt down and lifted up their hearts to God!

The little party were soon guided by Mrs. Smyth to the hospitable abode of a good missionary, whom Christian charity has placed here as a shepherd to the outcast and wandering, who are constantly finding an asylum on this shore.

Who can speak of the blessedness of the first day of freedom? Is not the *sense* of liberty a higher and finer one than any of the five? To move, speak and breathe, go out and come in unwatched and free from danger! Who can speak the blessings of that rest which comes down on the free man's pillow, under laws which ensure in him the rights that God has given to man? How fair and precious to that mother was that sleeping child's face, endeared by the memory of a thousand dangers! How impossible was it to sleep in the exuberant possession of such blessedness! And yet these two had not one acre of ground, not a roof that they could call their own; they had spent their all, to the last dollar. They had nothing more than the birds of the air, or the flowers of the field—yet they could not sleep for joy. "Oh, ye who take freedom from man, with what words shall ye answer it to God?"

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE VICTORY

HAVE not many of us in the weary way of life felt, in some hours, how far easier it were to die than to live?

When Tom stood face to face with his persecutor, and heard his threats, and thought in his very soul that his hour was come, his heart swelled bravely in him, and he thought he could bear torture and fire, bear anything with the vision of Jesus and heaven just a step beyond; but when he was gone, and the present excitement passed off, came back the pain of his bruised and weary limbs, came back the sense of his utterly degraded, hopeless, forlorn estate; and the day passed wearily enough.

Long before his wounds were healed, Legree insisted that he should be put to the regular field-work, and then came day after day of pain and weariness by every kind of injustice and indignity that the ill-will of a mean and malicious mind could devise. Whoever, in *our* circumstances, has made trial of pain, even with all the alleviations which for us usually attend it, must know the irritation that comes with it.

Tom no longer wondered at the habitual surliness of his associates; nay, he found the placid, sunny temper, which had been the habitude of his life, broken in on and sorely strained by the inroads of the same thing. He had flattered himself on leisure to read his Bible, but there was no such thing as leisure there. In the height of the season, Legree did not hesitate to press all his hands through Sundays and weekdays alike. Why shouldn't he? He made more cotton by it, and gained his wager; and if it wore out a few more hands, he could buy better ones.

At first Tom used to read a verse or two of his Bible, by the flicker of the fire, after he had returned from his daily toil; but after the cruel treatment he received, he used to come home so exhausted that his head swam and his eyes

failed when he tried to read, and he was fain to stretch himself down with the others in utter exhaustion.

It is strange that the religious peace and trust which had upborne him hitherto should give way to tossings of soul and despondent darkness. The gloomiest problem of this mysterious life was constantly before his eyes: souls crushed and ruined, evil triumphant, and God silent. It was weeks and months that Tom wrestled, in his own soul, in darkness and sorrow. He thought of Miss Ophelia's letter to his Kentucky friends, and would pray that God would send him deliverance; and then he would watch, day after day, in the vague hope of seeing somebody sent to redeem him; and, when nobody came, he would crush back to his soul bitter thoughts—that it was vain to serve God, that God had forgotten him. He sometimes saw Cassy; and sometimes, when summoned to the house, caught a glimpse of the dejected form of Emmeline, but held very little communion with either; in fact, there was no time for him to commune with anybody.

One evening he was sitting in utter dejection and prostration by a few decayed brands, where his coarse supper was baking. He put a few bits of brushwood on the fire, and strove to raise the light, and then drew his worn Bible from his pocket. There were all the marked passages which had thrilled his soul so often—words of patriarchs and seers, poets and sages, who from early time had spoken courage to man—voices from the cloud of witnesses who ever surround us in the race of life. Had the word lost its power, or could the failing eye and weary sense no longer answer to the touch of that mighty inspiration? Heavily sighing, he put it in his pocket. A coarse laugh roused him; he looked up—Legree was standing opposite to him.

"Well, old boy," he said, "you find your religion don't work, it seems! I thought I should get that through your wool at last!"

The cruel taunt was more than hunger, and cold, and nakedness. Tom was silent.

"You were a fool," said Legree; "for I meant to do well by you when I bought you. You might have been better off than Sambo, or Quimbo either, and had

easy times; and instead of getting cut up and thrashed every day or two, ye might have had liberty to lord it round, and cut up the other niggers; and ye might have had, now and then, a good warming of whisky-punch. Come, don't you think you'd better be reasonable? Heave that ar old pack of trash in the fire, and join my church!"

"The Lord forbid!" said Tom fervently.

"You see the Lord an't going to help you; if He had been, He wouldn't have let *me* get you! This yer religion is all mess of lying trumpery, Tom. I know all about it. Ye'd better hold to me; I'm somebody and can do something!"

"No, mas'r," said Tom, "I'll hold on. The Lord may help me or not help; but I'll hold to Him, and believe Him to the last!"

"The more fool you!" said Legree, spitting scornfully at him, and spurning him with his foot. "Never mind, I'll chase you down yet, and bring you under, you'll see!" and Legree turned away.

When a heavy weight presses the soul to the lowest level at which endurance is possible, there is an instant and desperate effort of every physical and moral nerve to throw off the weight; and hence the heaviest anguish often precedes a return of joy and courage. So was it now with Tom. The atheistic taunts of his cruel master sank his before dejected soul to the lowest ebb; and though the hand of faith still held to the eternal Rock, it was with a numb, despairing grasp. Tom sat like one stunned at the fire. Suddenly everything around him seemed to fade, and a vision rose before him of One crowned with thorns, buffeted and bleeding. Tom gazed in awe and wonder at the majestic patience of the face; the deep pathetic eyes thrilled him to his inmost heart; his soul woke as, with floods of emotion, he stretched out his hands and fell upon his knees; when gradually the vision changed, the sharp thorns became rays of glory, and in splendour inconceivable he saw that same face bending compassionately towards him, and a voice said, "He that overcometh shall sit down with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne."

How long Tom lay there he knew not.

From this time an inviolable sphere of peace encompassed the lowly heart of the oppressed one—an ever-present Saviour hallowed it as a temple. Past now the bleeding of earthly regrets—past its fluctuations of hope, and fear, and desire—the human will, bent and bleeding, and struggling long, was now entirely merged in the divine. So short now seemed the remaining voyage of life—so near, so vivid, seemed eternal blessedness—that life's uttermost woes fell from him unharming.

All noticed the change in his appearance. Cheerfulness and alertness seemed to return to him, and a quietness which no insult or injury could ruffle seemed to possess him.

"What the devil's got into Tom?" Legree said to Sambo. "A while ago he was all down in the mouth, and now he's peart as a cricket."

"Dunno, mas'r; gwine to run off, mebbe."

"Like to see him try that," said Legree, with a savage grin. "wouldn't we, Sambo?"

"Guess we would! haw! ho!" said the sooty gnome, laughing obsequiously. "Lord, de fun! To see him stickin' in de mud, chasin' and tarin' through de bushes, dogs a-holdin' on to him! Lord, I laughed fit to split dat ar time we cotched Molly. I thought they'd a had her all stripped up afore I could get 'em off. She car's de marks o' dat ar' spree yet."

"I reckon she will to her grave," said Legree. "But now, Sambo, you look sharp! If the nigger's got anything of this sort going, trip him up."

"Mas'r let me 'lone for dat!" said Sambo. "I'll tree de coon! Ho, ho, ho!"

This was spoken as Legree was getting on his horse to go to the neighbouring town. That night, as he was returning, he thought he would turn his horse and ride round the quarters, and see if all was safe.

It was a superb moonlight night, and the shadows of the graceful China trees lay minutely pencilled on the turf below, and there was that transparent stillness in the air which it seems almost unholy to disturb. Legree was at a little distance from the quarters when he heard the voice

of some one singing. It was not a usual sound there, and he paused to listen. A musical tenor voice sang:

> When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I'll bid farewell to every fear,
> And wipe my weeping eyes.

"So, ho!" said Legree to himself, "he thinks so, does he? How I hate these cursed Methodist hymns! Here, you nigger!" said he, coming suddenly out upon Tom, and raising his riding-whip, "how dare you be gettin' up this yer row, when you ought to be in bed? Shut up yer old black gash, and get along in with you!"

"Yes, mas'r," said Tom, with ready cheerfulness, as he rose to go in.

Legree was provoked beyond measure by Tom's evident happiness; and, riding up to him, belaboured him over his head and shoulders.

"There, you dog," he said, "see if you feel so comfortable after that!"

But the blows fell now only on the outer man, and not, as before, on the heart. Tom stood perfectly submissive; and yet Legree could not hide from himself that his power over his bond-thrall was somehow gone. And, as Tom disappeared in his cabin, and he wheeled his horse suddenly round, there passed through his mind one of those vivid flashes that often send the lightning of conscience across the dark and wicked soul. He understood full well that it was God who was standing between him and his victim, and he blasphemed Him.

Tom's whole soul overflowed with compassion and sympathy for the poor wretches by whom he was surrounded. To him it seemed as if his life-sorrows were now over, and as if, out of that strange treasury of peace and joy with which he had been endowed from above, he longed to pour out something for the relief of their woes. It is true, opportunities were scanty; but on the way to the fields and back again, and during the hours of labour, chances fell in his way of extending a helping hand to the weary, the disheartened, and discouraged. The poor, worn-down, brutalised creatures at first could scarcely compre-

hend this ; but when it was continued week after week, and month after month, it began to awaken long silent chords in their benumbed hearts. Gradually and imperceptibly the strange, silent, patient man, who was ready to bear every one's burden, and sought help from none—who stood aside for all, and came last, and took least, yet was foremost to share his little all with any who needed—the man who, in cold nights, would give up his tattered blanket to add to the comfort of some woman who shivered with sickness, and who filled the baskets of the weaker ones in the field, at the terrible risk of coming short in his own measure —and who, though pursued with unrelenting cruelty by their common tyrant, never joined in uttering a word of reviling or cursing—this man at last began to have a strange power over them ; and when the more pressing season was passed, and they were again allowed their Sundays for their own use, many would gather together to hear from him of Jesus. They would gladly have met to hear, and pray, and sing, in some place together, but Legree would not permit it, and more than once broke up such attempts with oaths and brutal execrations, so that the blessed news had to circulate from individual to individual. Yet who can speak the simple joy with which some of those poor outcasts, to whom life was a joyless journey to a dark unknown, heard of a compassionate Redeemer and a heavenly home ?

One night, after all in Tom's cabin were sunk in sleep, he was suddenly aroused by seeing Cassy's face at the hole between the logs that served for a window. She made a silent gesture for him to come out.

Tom came out at the door. It was between one and two o'clock at night—broad, calm, still moonlight. Tom remarked, as the light of the moon fell upon Cassy's large black eyes, that there was a wild and peculiar glare in them, unlike their wonted fixed despair.

" Come here, Father Tom," she said, laying her small hand on his wrist, and drawing him forward with a force as if the hand were of steel ; " come here—I've news for you."

" What, Misse Cassy ? " said Tom anxiously.

" Tom, wouldn't you like your liberty ? "

" I shall have it, misse, in God's time," said Tom.

"Ay, but you may have it to-night," said Cassy, with a flash of sudden energy. "Come on."

Tom hesitated.

"Come!" said she in a whisper, fixing her black eyes on him. "Come along! He's asleep—sound. I put enough into his brandy to keep him so. I wish I'd had more, I shouldn't have wanted you. But come, the back door is unlocked; there is an axe there, I put it there—his room door is open; I'll show you the way. I'd a done it myself, only my arms are so weak. Come along!"

"Not for ten thousand worlds, misse!" said Tom firmly, stopping and holding her back, as she was pressing forward.

"But think of all these poor creatures!" said Cassy. "We might set them all free, and go somewhere in the swamps and find an island, and live by ourselves; I've heard of its being done. Any life is better than this."

"No!" said Tom firmly. "No! Good never comes of wickedness. I'd sooner chop my right hand off!"

"Then *I* shall do it," said Cassy, turning.

"O Misse Cassy!" said Tom, throwing himself before her, "for the dear Lord's sake that died for ye, don't sell your precious soul to the devil that way! Nothing but evil will come of it. The Lord hasn't called us to wrath. We must suffer, and wait His time."

"Wait!" said Cassy. "Haven't I waited?—waited till my head is dizzy and my heart sick? What has he made me suffer? What has he made hundreds of poor creatures suffer? Isn't he wringing the life-blood out of you? I'm called on! They call me! His time's come, and I'll have his heart's blood!"

"No, no, no!" said Tom, holding her small hands, which were clenched with spasmodic violence. "No, ye poor, lost soul, that ye mustn't do! The dear, blessed Lord never shed no blood but His own, and that He poured out for us when we was enemies. Lord, help us to follow His steps, and love our enemies!"

"Love!" said Cassy, with a fierce glare, "love *such* enemies! It isn't in flesh and blood."

"No, misse, it isn't," said Tom, looking up; "but *He* gives it to us, and that's the *victory*. When we can love and pray over all and through all, the battle's past and the

victory's come—glory be to God!" And with streaming eyes and choking voice the black man looked up to heaven.

The deep fervour of Tom's feelings, the softness of his voice, his tears, fell like dew on the wild, unsettled spirit of the poor woman. A softness gathered over the lurid fires of her eye; she looked down, and Tom could feel the relaxing muscles of her hand.

"Misse Cassy," said Tom, in a hesitating tone, after surveying her a moment in silence, "if you only could get away from here—if the thing was possible—I'd 'vise ye and Emmeline to do it; that is, if ye could go without blood-guiltiness—not otherwise."

"Would you try it with us, Father Tom?"

"No," said Tom. "Time was when I would; but the Lord's given me a work among these yer poor souls, and I'll stay with 'em and bear my cross with 'em till the end. It's different with you; it's a snare to you—it's more'n you can stand; and you'd better go if you can."

"I know no way but through the grave," said Cassy. "There's no beast or bird but can find a home somewhere, even the snakes and the alligators have their places to lie down and be quiet; but there's no place for us. Down in the darkest swamps their dogs will hunt us out, and find us. Everybody and everything is against us, even the very beasts side against us; and where shall we go?"

Tom stood silent; at length, he said:

"Him that saved Daniel in the den of lions—that saved the children in the fiery furnace—Him that walked on the sea and bade the winds be still—He's alive yet; and I've faith to believe He can deliver you. Try it, and I'll pray with all my might for you."

By what strange law of mind is it that an idea long overlooked, and trodden under foot as a useless stone, suddenly sparkles out in new light, as a discovered diamond!

Cassy had often revolved, for hours, all possible or probable schemes of escape, and dismissed them all as hopeless and impracticable; but at this moment there flashed through her mind a plan, so simple and feasible in all its details, as to awaken an instant hope.

"Father Tom, I'll try it!" said she suddenly.

"Amen!" said Tom. "The Lord help ye!"

CHAPTER XXXV

THE STRATAGEM

THE garret of the house that Legree occupied, like most other garrets, was a great desolate space, dusty, hung with cobwebs, and littered with cast-off lumber. The opulent family that had inhabited the house in the day of its splendour had imported a great deal of furniture. some of which they had taken away with them, while some remained standing desolate in mouldering, unoccupied rooms, or stored away in this place. One or two immense packing-boxes, in which this furniture was brought, stood against the sides of the garret. There was a small window there, which let in through its dingy, dusty panes a scanty uncertain light on the tall, high-backed chairs and dusty tables, that had once seen better days. Altogether, it was a weird and ghostly place; but, ghostly as it was, it wanted not in legends among the superstitious negroes to increase its terrors. Some few years before, a negro woman who had incurred Legree's displeasure was confined there for several weeks. What passed there we do not say; the negroes used to whisper darkly to each other; but it was known that the body of the unfortunate creature was one day taken down from there, and buried; and after that it was said that oaths and cursings, and the sound of violent blows, used to ring through that old garret, and mingled with wailings and groans of despair. Once, when Legree chanced to overhear something of this kind, he flew into a violent passion, and swore that the next one that told stories about that garret should have an opportunity of knowing what was there, for he would chain them up there for a week. This hint was enough to repress talking, though, of course, it did not disturb the credit of the story in the least.

Gradually the staircase that led to the garret, and even the passage-way to the staircase, were avoided by every one in the house, from every one fearing to speak of it, and the legend was gradually falling into desuetude. It had

suddenly occurred to Cassy to make use of the superstitious excitability which was so great in Legree for the purpose of her liberation, and that of her fellow-sufferer.

The sleeping-room of Cassy was directly under the garret. One day without consulting Legree, she suddenly took it upon her, with some considerable ostentation, to change all the furniture and appurtenances of the room to one at some considerable distance. The under-servants, who were called on to effect this movement, were running and bustling about with great zeal and confusion, when Legree returned from a ride.

"Hallo, you Cass!" said Legree; "what's in the wind now?"

"Nothing; only I choose to have another room," said Cassy doggedly.

"And what for, pray?" said Legree.

"I choose to," said Cassy.

"The devil you do! and what for?"

"I'd like to get some sleep, now and then."

"Sleep! Well, what hinders your sleeping?"

"I could tell, I suppose, if you want to hear," said Cassy dryly.

"Speak out, you minx!" said Legree.

"Oh, nothing! I suppose it wouldn't disturb *you*! Only groans, and people scuffling and rolling round on the garret-floor half the night, from twelve to morning!"

"People up garret!" said Legree uneasily, but forcing a laugh. "Who are they, Cassy?"

Cassy raised her sharp black eyes, and looked in the face of Legree with an expression that went through his bones as she said, "To be sure, Simon, who are they? I'd like to have *you* tell me. You don't know, I suppose!"

With an oath, Legree struck at her with his riding-whip, but she glided to one side, and passed through the door, and looking back, said, "If you'll sleep in that room, you'll know all about it. Perhaps you'd try it!" and then immediately she shut and locked the door.

Legree blustered and swore, and threatened to break down the door; but apparently thought better of it, and walked uneasily into the sitting-room. Cassy perceived that her shaft had struck home; and from that hour, with the most

exquisite address, she never ceased to continue the train of influences she had begun.

In a knot-hole in the garret she had inserted the neck of an old bottle in such a manner, that, when there was the least wind, most doleful and lugubrious wailing sounds proceeded from it, which, in a high wind, would increase to a perfect shriek, such as to credulous and superstitious ears might easily seem to be that of horror and despair.

These sounds were from time to time heard by the servants and revived in full force the memory of the ghost legend. A superstitious creeping horror seemed to fill the house; and though no one dared to breathe it to Legree, he found himself encompassed by it as by an atmosphere.

The influence of Cassy over him was of a strange and singular kind. He was her owner, her tyrant, and tormentor. She was, as he knew, wholly, and without any possibility of help or redress, in his hands; and yet, so it is the most brutal man cannot live in constant association with a strong female influence, and not be greatly controlled by it. When he first bought her, she was, as she had said, a woman delicately bred; and then he crushed her, without scruple, beneath the foot of his brutality. But, as time, and debasing influences and despair, hardened womanhood within her, and waked the fires of fiercer passions, she had become in a measure his mistress, and he alternately tyrannised over and dreaded her.

This influence had become more harassing and decided, since partial insanity had given her a strange, weird, unsettled cast to all her words and language.

A night or two after this, Legree was sitting in the old sitting-room, by the side of a flickering wood fire, that threw uncertain glances round the room. It was a stormy, windy night, such as raises whole squadrons of nondescript noises in rickety old houses. Windows were rattling, shutters flapping, the wind carousing, rumbling, and tumbling down the chimney, and every once in a while puffing out smoke and ashes, as if a legion of spirits were coming after them. Legree had been casting up accounts, and reading newspapers for some hours, while Cassy sat in the corner, sullenly looking into the fire. Legree laid down his paper, and seeing an old book lying on the table, which he had

noticed Cassy reading the first part of the evening, took it up, and began to turn it over. It was one of those collections of stories of bloody murders, ghostly legends, and supernatural visitations, which, coarsely got up and illustrated, have a strange fascination for one who once begins to read them.

Legree poohed and pished, but read, turning page after page, till, finally, after reading some way, he threw down the book with an oath.

"You don't believe in ghosts, do you, Cass?" said he, taking the tongs and settling the fire. "I thought you'd more sense than to let noises scare *you*."

Cassy sat looking intently at him in the shadow of the corner. There was that strange light in her eyes that always impressed Legree with uneasiness.

"Them noises was nothing but rats and the wind," said Legree. "Rats will make a devil of a noise. Come, speak out, woman—don't you think so?

"Can rats walk downstairs, and come walking through the entry, and open a door when you've locked it and set a chair against it?" said Cassy; "and come walk, walk, walking right up to your bed, and put out their hand so?"

Cassy kept her glittering eyes fixed on Legree as she spoke, and he stared at her like a man in the nightmare, till, when she finished by laying her hand, icy cold, on his, he sprang back with an oath.

"Woman! What do you mean? Nobody did!"

"Oh, no—of course not. Did I say they did?" said Cassy, with a smile of chilling derision.

"But—did—have you really seen? Come, Cass, what is it now—speak out!"

"You may sleep there yourself," said Cassy, "if you want to know."

"Did it come from the garret, Cassy?"

"*It*—what?" said Cassy.

"Why, what you told of."

"I didn't tell you anything," said Cassy, with dogged sullenness.

Legree walked up and down the room uneasily.

"I'll have this yer thing examined. I'll look into it this very night. I'll take my pistols——"

"Do," said Cassy; "sleep in that room. I'd like to see you doing it. Fire your pistols—do!"

Legree stamped his foot and swore violently.

"Don't swear," said Cassy, "nobody knows who may be hearing you. Hark! What was that?"

"What?" said Legree, starting.

A heavy old Dutch clock, that stood in the corner of the room, began and slowly struck twelve.

For some reason or other Legree neither spoke nor moved; a vague horror fell on him; while Cassy, with a keen, sneering glitter in her eyes, stood looking at him, counting the strokes.

"Twelve o'clock; well, *now* we'll see," said she, turning and opening the door into the passage-way, and standing as if listening.

"Hark! What's that?" said she, raising her finger.

"It's only the wind," said Legree. "Don't you hear how cursedly it blows?"

"Simon, come here," said Cassy, in a whisper, laying her hand on his and leading him to the foot of the stairs; "do you know what *that* is? Hark!"

A wild shriek came pealing down the stairway. It came from the garret. Legree's knees knocked together; his face grew white with fear.

"Hadn't you better get your pistols?" said Cassy, with a sneer that froze Legree's blood. "It's time this thing was looked into, you know. I'd like to have you go up now; *they're at it.*"

"I won't go!" said Legree, with an oath.

"Why not? There ain't any such thing as ghosts, you know! Come!" and Cassy flitted up the winding stairway, laughing, and looking back after him. "Come on."

"I believe you *are* the devil!" said Legree. "Come back, you hag—come back, Cass! You shan't go!"

But Cassy laughed wildly, and fled on. He heard her open the entry doors that led to the garret. A wild gust of wind swept down, extinguishing the candle he held in his hand, and with it the fearful, unearthly screams; they seemed to be shrieked in his very ear.

Legree fled frantically into the parlour, whither, in a few moments, he was followed by Cassy, pale, firm, cold as

an avenging spirit, and with that same fearful light in her eye.

"I hope you are satisfied," said she.

"Blast you, Cass!" said Legree.

"What for?" said Cassy. "I only went up and shut the doors. *What's the matter with that garret*, Simon, do you suppose?" said she.

"None of your business!" said Legree.

"Oh, it an't? Well," said Cassy, "at any rate, I'm glad *I* don't sleep under it."

Anticipating the rising of the wind that very evening, Cassy had been up and opened the garret-window. Of course the moment the doors were opened the wind had drafted down, and extinguished the light.

This may serve as a specimen of the game that Cassy played with Legree, until he would sooner have put his head into a lion's mouth than to have explored that garret. Meanwhile, in the night, when everybody else was asleep, Cassy slowly and carefully accumulated there a stock of provisions sufficient to afford subsistence for some time; she transferred, article by article, a greater part of her own and Emmeline's wardrobe. All things being arranged, they only waited a fitting opportunity to put their plan in execution.

By cajoling Legree, and taking advantage of a good-natured interval, Cassy had got him to take her with him to the neighbouring town, which was situated directly on the Red River. With a memory sharpened to almost preternatural clearness, she remarked every turn in the road, and formed a mental estimate of the time to be occupied in traversing it. At the same time when all was matured for action, our readers, may perhaps, like to look behind the scenes, and see the final *coup d'état*.

It was now near evening. Legree had been absent on a ride to a neighbouring farm. For many days Cassy had been unusually gracious and accommodating in her humours; and Legree and she had been, apparently, on the best of terms. At present, we may behold her and Emmeline in the room of the latter, busy in sorting and arranging two small bundles.

"There, these will be large enough," said Cassy. "Now

put on your bonnet, and let's start; it's just about the right time."

"Why, they can see us yet," said Emmeline.

"I mean they shall," said Cassy, coolly. "Don't you know that they must have their chase after us, at any rate? The way of the thing is to be just this. We will steal out of the back door, and run down by the quarters. Sambo or Quimbo will be sure to see us. They will give chase, and we will get into the swamp; then, they can't follow us any farther till they go up and give the alarm, and turn out the dogs, and so on; and while they are blundering round, and tumbling over each other, as they always do, you and I will just slip along to the creek that runs back of the house, and wade along in it till we get opposite the back door. That will put the dogs all at fault; for scent won't lie in the water. Every one will run out of the house to look after us, and then we'll whip in at the back door, and up into the garret, where I've got a nice bed made up in one of the great boxes. We must stay in that garret a good while; for, I tell you, he will raise heaven and earth after us. He'll muster some of those old overseers on the other plantations, and have a great hunt; and they'll go over every inch of ground in that swamp. He makes it his boast that nobody ever got away from him. So let him hunt at his leisure."

"Cassy, how well you have planned it!" said Emmeline. "Whoever would have thought of it but you?"

There was neither pleasure or exultation in Cassy's eyes—only a despairing firmness.

"Come," she said, reaching her hand to Emmeline.

The two fugitives glided noiselessly from the house, and flitted, through the gathering shadows of evening, along by the quarters. The crescent moon, set like a silver signet in the western sky, delayed a little the approach of night. As Cassy expected, when quite near the verge of the swamps that encircled the plantation, they heard a voice calling to them to stop. It was not Sambo, however, but Legree, who was pursuing them with violent execrations. At the sound, the feebler spirit of Emmeline gave way; and, laying hold of Cassy's arm, she said, "O Cassy, I'm going to faint!"

"If you do, I'll kill you!" said Cassy, drawing a small

glittering stiletto, and flashing it before the eyes of the girl. The diversion accomplished the purpose. Emmeline did not faint, and succeeded in plunging with Cassy into a part of the labyrinth of swamp, so deep and dark that it was hopeless for Legree to think of following them without assistance.

"Well," said he, chuckling brutally, "at any rate, they've got themselves into a trap now—the baggages! They're safe enough. They shall sweat for it!"

"Hulloa, there! Sambo! Quimbo! All hands!" called Legree, coming to the quarters when the men and women were just returning from work. "There's two runaways in the swamps. I'll give five dollars to any nigger as catches 'em. Turn out the dogs! Turn out Tiger, and Fury, and the rest!"

The sensation produced by this news was immediate. Many of the men sprang forward officiously to offer their services, either from the hope of the reward, or from that cringing subserviency which is one of the most baleful effects of slavery. Some ran one way, and some another. Some were for getting flambeaux of pine-knots. Some were uncoupling the dogs, whose hoarse, savage bay added not a little to the animation of the scene.

"Mas'r, shall we shoot 'em if we can't cotch 'em?" said Sambo, to whom his master brought out a rifle.

"You may fire on Cass, if you like; it's time she was gone to the devil, where she belongs; but not the gal," said Legree. "And now, boys, be spry and smart. Five dollars for him that get's 'em; and a glass of spirits to every one of you anyhow."

The whole band, with the glare of blazing torches, and whoop, and shout, and savage yell of man and beast, proceeded down the swamp, followed at some distance by every servant in the house. The establishment was, of a consequence, wholly deserted when Cassy and Emmeline glided into it the back way. The whooping and shouts of their pursuers were still filling the air; and, looking from the sitting-room windows, Cassy and Emmeline could see the troop, with their flambeaux, just dispersing themselves along the edge of the swamp.

"See there!" said Emmeline, pointing to Cassy; "the

hunt is begun! Look how those lights dance about! Hark! the dogs! Don't you hear? If we were only *there*, our chance wouldn't be worth a picayune. Oh, for pity's sake, do let's hide ourselves! Quick!"

"There's no occasion for hurry," said Cassy coolly; "they are all out after the hunt—that's the amusement of the evening! We'll go upstairs by and by. Meanwhile," said she, deliberately taking a key from the pocket of a coat that Legree had thrown down in his hurry, "meanwhile I shall take something to pay our passage."

She unlocked the desk, took from it a roll of bills, which she counted over rapidly.

"Oh, don't let's do that!" said Emmeline.

"Don't!" said Cassy; "why not? Would you have us starve in the swamps, or have that that will pay our way to the free states? Money will do anything girl." And, as she spoke, she put the money in her bosom.

"It would be stealing," said Emmeline, in a distressed whisper.

"Stealing!" said Cassy, with a scornful laugh. "They who steal body and soul needn't talk to us. But come, we may as well go up to the garret; I've got a stock of candles there, and some books to pass away the time. You may be pretty sure they won't come *there* to inquire after us. If they do, I'll play ghost for them."

When Emmeline reached the garret, she found an immense box, in which some heavy pieces of furniture had once been bought, turned on its side, so that the opening faced the wall, or rather the eaves. Cassy lit a small lamp, and, creeping round under the eaves, they established themselves in it. It was spread with a couple of small mattresses and some pillows; a box near by was plentifully stored with candles, provisions, and all the clothing necessary for their journey, which Cassy had arranged into bundles of an astonishingly small compass.

"There," said Cassy, as she fixed the lamp on a small hook, which she had driven into the side of the box for that purpose; "this is to be our home for the present. How do you like it?"

"Are you sure they won't come and search the garret?"

"I'd like to see Simon Legree doing that," said Cassy.

"No, indeed; he will be too glad to keep away. As to the servants, they would any of them stand and be shot sooner than show their faces here."

Somewhat reassured, Emmeline settled herself back on her pillow, and overcome with exhaustion, fell into a doze, and slept some time. She was awakened by loud shouts and outcries, the tramp of horses' feet, and the baying of dogs. She started up with a faint shriek.

"Only the hunt coming back," said Cassy coolly; "never fear. Look out of this knot-hole. Don't you see 'em all down there? Simon has to give it up for this night. Look how muddy his horse is, flouncing about in the swamp; the dogs too, look rather crestfallen. Ah, my good sir, you'll have to try the race again and again—the game isn't there."

"Oh, don't speak a word!" said Emmeline. "What if they should hear you?"

"If they do hear anything, it will make them very particular to keep away," said Cassy. "No danger; we may make any noise we please, and it will only add to the effect."

At length the stillness of midnight settled down over the house. Legree, cursing his ill-luck, and vowing dire vengeance on the morrow, went to bed.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE MARTYR

"WELL," said Cassy, the next day, from the garret, as she reconnoitred through the knot-hole, "the hunt's going to begin again to-day!"

Three or four mounted horsemen were curveting about on the space in front of the house; and one or two leashes of strange dogs were struggling with the negroes who held them, baying and barking at each other. The men are, two of them, overseers of plantations in the vicinity; and others were some of Legree's associates at the tavern-bar of a neighbouring city, who had come for the interest of the sport. A more hard-favoured set, perhaps, could not

be imagined. Legree was serving brandy profusely round among them, as also among the negroes who had been detailed from the various plantations for this service; for it was an object to make every service of this kind among the negroes as much of a holiday as possible.

Cassy placed her ear at the knot-hole; and as the morning air blew directly towards the house she could overhear a good deal of the conversation. A grave sneer overcast the dark, severe gravity of her face, as she listened, and heard them divide out the ground, discuss the rival merits of the dogs, give orders about firing, and the treatment of each in case of capture.

Cassy drew back; and, clasping her hands, looked upward, and said, "O great Almighty God! we are *all* sinners; but what have *we* done, more than all the rest of the world, that we should be treated so?"

There was a terrible earnestness in her face and voice as she spoke.

"If it wasn't for *you* child," she said, looking at Emmeline, "I'd go out to them; and I'd thank any one of them that *would* shoot me down; for what use will freedom be to me? Can it give me back my children, or make me what I used to be?"

Emmeline, in her childlike simplicity, was half afraid of the dark moods of Cassy. She looked perplexed, but made no answer. She only took her hand, with a gentle, caressing movement.

"Don't!" said Cassy, trying to draw it away; "you'll get me to loving you; and I never mean to love anything again!"

"Poor Cassy!" said Emmeline, "don't feel so! If the Lord gives us liberty, perhaps He'll give you back your daughter; at any rate I'll be like a daughter to you. I know I'll never see my poor old mother again! I shall love you, Cassy, whether you love me or not!"

The gentle, childlike spirit conquered. Cassy sat down by her, put her arm round her neck, stroked her soft brown hair; and Emmeline then wondered at the beauty of her magnificent eyes, now soft with tears.

"O Em!" said Cassy, "I've hungered for my children, and thirsted for them, and my eyes fail with longing for

them! Here! here!" she said, striking her breast, "it's all desolate, all empty! If God would give me back my children, then I could pray."

"You must trust Him, Cassy," said Emmeline; "He is our Father!"

"His wrath is upon us," said Cassy; "He has turned away in anger."

"No, Cassy! He will be good to us! Let us hope in Him," said Emmeline. "I always have had hope."

* * * * * *

The hunt was long, animated, and thorough, but unsuccessful; and, with grave, ironic exultation, Cassy looked down on Legree, as, weary and dispirited, he alighted from his horse.

"Now, Quimbo," said Legree, as he stretched himself down in the sitting room, "you just go and walk that Tom up here, right away! The old cuss is at the bottom of this yer whole matter; and I'll have it out of his old black hide, or I'll know the reason why!"

Sambo and Quimbo both, though hating each other, were joined in one mind by a no less cordial hatred of Tom. Legree had told them at first that he had bought him for a general overseer in his absence; and this had begat an ill-will on their part, which had increased, in their debased and servile natures, as they saw him becoming obnoxious to their master's displeasure. Quimbo, therefore, departed with a will to execute his orders.

Tom heard the message with a forewarning heart; for he knew all the plan of the fugitives' escape, and the place of their present concealment. He knew the deadly character of the man he had to deal with, and his despotic power. But he felt strong in God to meet death, rather than betray the helpless.

He set his basket down by the row, and, looking up, said, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit! Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!" and then quietly yielded himself to the rough, brutal grasp with which Quimbo seized him.

"Ay, ay!" said the giant, as he dragged him along "ye'll cotch it, now! I'll boun' mas'r's back's up high! No sneaking out, now! Tell ye, ye'll get it, and no mistake!

See how you'll look, now, helpin' mas'r's niggers to run away! See what ye'll get!"

The savage words none of them reached that ear—a higher voice there was saying, "Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Nerve and bone of that poor man's body vibrated to those words, as if touched by the finger of God; and he felt the strength of a thousand souls in one. As he passed along the trees and bushes, the huts of his servitude, the whole scene of his degradation seemed to whirl by him, as the landscape by the rushing car. His soul throbbed—his home was in sight—and the hour of release seemed at hand.

"Well, Tom," said Legree, walking up and seizing him grimly by the collar of his coat, and speaking through his teeth, in a paroxysm of determined rage, "do you know I've made up my mind to KILL you?"

"It's very likely, mas'r," said Tom calmly.

"I *have*," said Legree, with grim, terrible calmness, "*done—just—that—thing*, Tom, unless you tell me what you know about these yer gals!"

Tom stood silent.

"D'ye hear?" said Legree, stamping, with a roar like that of an incensed lion. "Speak!"

"I *han't got nothing to tell, mas'r*," said Tom, with a slow, firm, deliberate utterance.

"Do you dare to tell me, ye old black Christian, ye don't *know?*" said Legree.

Tom was silent.

"Speak!" thundered Legree, striking him furiously. "Do you know anything?"

"I know, mas'r; but I can't tell anything. I *can die!*"

Legree drew in a long breath; and, suppressing his rage, took Tom by the arm, and, approaching his face almost to his, said, in a terrible voice, "Hark'e, Tom—ye think 'cause I've let you off before, I don't mean what I say; but this time I've *made up my mind*, and counted the cost. You've always stood it out against me—now I'll *conquer you or kill you*—one or t'other. I'll count every drop of blood there is in you, and take 'em one by one till ye give up!"

Tom looked up to his master, and answered, "Mas'r, if

you was sick, or in trouble, or dying, and I could save ye, I'd *give* ye my heart's blood ; and if taking every drop of blood in this poor old body would save your precious soul, I'd give 'em freely, as the Lord gave His for me. Oh, mas'r, don't bring this great sin on your soul ! It will hurt you more than 'twill me ! Do the worst you can, my troubles 'll be over soon ; but if ye don't repent, yours won't *never* end ! "

Like a strange snatch of heavenly music, heard in the lull of a tempest, this burst of feeling made a moment's blank pause. Legree stood aghast, and looked at Tom ; and there was such a silence that the tick of the old clock could be heard, measuring, with silent touch, the last moments of mercy and probation to that hardened heart.

It was but a moment. There was one hesitating pause, one irresolute, relenting thrill, and the spirit of evil came back with sevenfold vehemence ; and Legree, foaming with rage, smote his victim to the ground.

* * * * * *

Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart. What man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear. What brother-man and brother Christian must suffer cannot be told us, even in our secret chamber, it so harrows up the soul. And yet, O my country ! these things are done under the shadow of thy laws ! O Christ ! Thy Church sees them, almost in silence !

But of old there was One whose suffering changed an instrument of torture, degradation, and shame, into a symbol of glory, honour, and immortal life ; and where His Spirit is, neither degrading stripes, nor blood, nor insults, can make the Christian's last struggle less than glorious.

Was he alone that long night, whose brave, loving spirit was bearing up, in that old shed, against buffeting and brutal stripes ?

Nay ! There stood by him ONE, seen by him alone, " like unto the Son of God."

The tempter stood by him, too, blinded by furious, despotic will, every moment pressing him to shun that agony by the betrayal of the innocent. But the brave, true heart was firm on the Eternal Rock. Like his Master, he knew that, if he saved others, himself he could not save ;

nor could utmost extremity wring from him words, save of prayer and holy trust.

"He's most gone, mas'r," said Sambo, touched, in spite of himself, by the patience of his victim.

"Pay away till he gives up! Give it to him, give it to him!" shouted Legree. "I'll take every drop of blood he has, unless he confesses!"

Tom opened his eyes, and looked upon his master. "Ye poor miserable critter!" he said, "there an't no more ye can do! I forgive ye with all my soul!" and he fainted entirely away.

"I b'lieve, my soul, he's done for finally," said Legree, stepping forward to look at him. "Yes, he is! Well, his mouth's shut up at last—that's one comfort!"

Yes, Legree; but who shall shut up that voice in thy soul—that soul, past repentance, past prayer, past hope, in whom the fire that never shall be quenched is already burning?

Yet Tom was not quite gone. His wondrous words and pious prayers had struck upon the hearts of the embruted blacks who had been instruments of cruelty upon him; and the instant Legree withdrew they took him down, and, in their ignorance, sought to call him back to life—as if *that* were any favour to him!

"Sartin, we's been doin' a dreffful wicked thing!" said Sambo; "hopes mas'r 'll have to 'count for it, and not we."

They washed his wounds—they provided a rude bed of some refuse cotton for him to lie on; and one of them, stealing up to the house, begged a drink of brandy of Legree, pretending that he was tired, and wanted it for himself. He brought it back, and poured it down Tom's throat.

"O Tom!" said Quimbo, "we's been awful wicked to ye!"

"I forgive ye, with all my heart!" said Tom faintly.

"O Tom! do tell us who is *Jesus*, anyhow!" said Sambo; "Jesus, that's been a-standing by you so, all this night! Who is He?"

The word roused the failing, fainting spirit. He poured forth a few energetic sentences of that wondrous One—His

life, His death, His everlasting presence and power to save.

They wept—both the savage men.

"Why didn't I never hear this before?" said Sambo; "but I do believe! I can't help it! Lord Jesus, have mercy on us!"

"Poor critters!" said Tom, "I'd be willing to b'ar all I have, if it'll only bring ye to Christ! O Lord, give me these two more souls, I pray!"

That prayer was answered.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE YOUNG MASTER

Two days after, a young man drove a light wagon up through the avenue of China trees, and throwing the reins hastily on the horses' necks, sprang out and inquired for the owner of the place.

It was George Shelby; and, to show how he came to be there, we must go back in our story.

The letter of Miss Ophelia to Mrs. Shelby, had, by some unfortunate accident, been detained for a month or two at some remote post-office, before it reached its destination; and, of course, before it was received, Tom was already lost to view among the distant swamps of the Red River.

Mrs. Shelby read the intelligence with the deepest concern; but any immediate action upon it was an impossibility. She was then in attendance on the sick-bed of her husband, who lay delirious in the crisis of a fever. Master George Shelby, who, in the interval, had changed from a boy to a tall young man, was her constant and faithful assistant, and her only reliance in superintending his father's affairs. Miss Ophelia had taken the precaution to send the name of the lawyer who did business for the St. Clares; and the most that in the emergency could be done was to address a letter of inquiry to him. The sudden death of Mr. Shelby, a few days after, brought, of course, an absorbing pressure of other interests for a season.

Mr. Shelby showed his confidence in his wife's ability by

appointing her sole executrix upon his estates; and thus immediately a large and complicated amount of business was brought upon her hands.

Mrs. Shelby, with characteristic energy, applied herself to the work of straightening the entangled web of affairs, and she and George were for some time occupied with collecting and examining accounts, selling property and settling debts; for Mrs. Shelby was determined that everything should be brought into tangible and recognisable shape, let the consequences to her prove what they might. In the meantime they received a letter from the lawyer to whom Miss Ophelia had referred them saying that he knew nothing of the matter; that the man was sold at a public auction, and that, beyond receiving the money, he knew nothing of the affair.

Neither George nor Mrs. Shelby could be easy at this result; and, accordingly, some six months after, the former having business for his mother down the river, resolved to visit New Orleans in person, and push his inquiries in hopes of discovering Tom's whereabouts and restoring him.

After some months of unsuccessful search, by the merest accident George fell in with a man in New Orleans who happened to be possessed of the desired information; and, with his money in his pocket, our hero took steamboat for Red River, resolving to find out and re-purchase his old friend.

He was soon introduced into the house, where he found Legree in the sitting-room.

Legree received the stranger with a kind of surly hospitality.

"I understand," said the young man, "that you bought, in New Orleans, a boy named Tom. He used to be on my father's place, and I came to see if I couldn't buy him back.

Legree's brow grew dark, and he broke out passionately. "Yes, I did buy such a fellow, and a h—l of a bargain I had of it, too! The most rebellious, saucy, impudent dog! Set up my niggers to run away, got off two gals worth eight hundred or a thousand dollars a-piece. He owned to that, and, when I bid him tell me where they was, he up and said he knew, but he wouldn't tell; and stood to it,

though I gave him the cussedest flogging I ever gave nigger yet. I b'lieve he's trying to die; but I don't know as he'll make it out."

"Where is he?" said George impetuously. "Let me see him." The cheeks of the young man were crimson, and his eyes flashed fire; but he prudently said nothing as yet.

"He's in dat ar shed," said a little fellow, who stood holding George's horses.

Legree kicked the boy and swore at him; but George, without saying another word, turned and strode to the spot.

Tom had been lying two days since the fatal night; not suffering, for every nerve of suffering was blunted and destroyed. He lay, for the most part, in a quiet stupor; for the laws of a powerful and well-knit frame would not at once release the imprisoned spirit. By stealth, there had been there, in the darkness of the night, poor, desolated creatures, who stole from their scanty hours' rest, that they might repay to him some of those ministrations of love in which he had always been so abundant. Truly, those poor disciples had little to give—only the cup of cold water; but it was given with full hearts.

Tears had fallen on that honest, insensible face—tears of late repentance in the poor, ignorant heathen, whom his dying love and patience had awakened to repentance, and bitter prayers breathed over him to a late-found Saviour, of whom they scarce knew more than the name, but to whom the yearning, ignorant heart of man never implores in vain.

Cassy, who had glided out of her place of concealment, and, by overhearing, learned the sacrifice that had been made for her and Emmeline, had been there the night before, defying the danger of detection; and, moved by the last words which the affectionate soul had yet strength to breathe, the long winter of despair, the ice of years, had given way, and the dark, despairing woman had wept and prayed.

When George entered the shed, he felt his head giddy and his heart sick.

"Is it possible?—is it possible?" said he, kneeling down by him. "Uncle Tom, my poor, poor old friend!"

Something in the voice penetrated to the ear of the dying. He moved his head gently, and said :

" Bless the Lord ! it is—it is—it's all I wanted ! They haven't forgot me. It warms my soul ; it does my old heart good ! Now I shall die content ! Bless the Lord, O my soul ! "

" You shan't die ! You *mustn't* die, nor think of it ! I've come to buy you, and take you home," said George, with impetuous vehemence.

" O Mas'r George, ye're too late. The Lord's bought me, and is going to take me home—and I long to go. Heaven is better than Kentuck."

" Oh, don't die ! It'll kill me !—it'll break my heart to think what you've suffered—and lying in this old shed, here ! Poor, poor fellow ! "

" Don't call me poor fellow ! " said Tom solemnly. " I *have* been poor fellow, but that's all past and gone now. I'm right in the door, going into glory ! O Mas'r George ! *Heaven has come !* I've got the victory ! The Lord Jesus has given it to me ! Glory be to His name ! "

George was awestruck at the force, the vehemence, the power with which these broken sentences were uttered. He sat gazing in silence.

Tom grasped his hand, and continued—" Ye mustn't, now, tell Chloe, poor soul ! how ye found me ; 'twould be so dreffal to her. Only tell her ye found me going into glory ; and that I couldn't stay for no one. And tell her the Lord stood by me everywhere, and al'ays, and made everything light and easy. And oh, the poor chil'en, and the baby—my old heart's been most broke for 'em time and again. Tell 'em all to follow me—follow me ! Give my love to mas'r, and dear good missis, and everybody in the place ! Ye don't know ! 'Pears like I loves 'em all ! I loves every creatur', everywhar !—it's nothing *but* love ! O Mas'r George, what a thing it is to be a Christian !

At this moment Legree sauntered up to the door of the shed, looked in with a dogged air of affected carelessness, and turned away.

" The old Satan ! " said George in his indignation. " It's a comfort to think the devil will pay *him* for this some of these days ! "

"Oh, don't!—oh, ye mustn't!" said Tom, grasping his hand, "he's a poor mis'able critter. It's awful to think on't! Oh, if he only could repent, the Lord would forgive him now; but I'm 'feared he never will."

"I hope he won't!" said George. "I never want to see *him* in heaven."

"Hush, Mas'r George! it worries me. Don't feel so. He an't done me no real harm—only opened the gate of the kingdom for me; that's all!"

At this moment the sudden flush of strength which the joy of meeting his young master had infused into the dying man gave way. A sudden sinking fell upon him; he closed his eyes, and that mysterious and sublime change passed over his face that told the approach of other worlds.

He began to draw his breath with long, deep inspirations; and his broad chest rose and fell heavily. The expression of his face was that of a conqueror.

"Who—who—who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" he said, in a voice that contended with mortal weakness; and with a smile he fell asleep.

George sat fixed with solemn awe. It seemed to him that the place was holy; and as he closed the lifeless eyes, and rose up from the dead, only one thought possessed him—that expressed by his simple old friend, "What a thing it is to be a Christian!"

He turned. Legree was standing sullenly behind him.

Something in that dying scene had checked the natural fierceness of youthful passion. The presence of the man was simply loathsome to George; and he felt only an impulse to get away from him with as few words as possible.

Fixing his keen dark eyes on Legree, he simply said, pointing to the dead, "You have got all you ever can of him. What shall I pay you for the body? I will take it away, and bury it decently."

"I don't sell dead niggers," said Legree doggedly. "You are welcome to bury him where and when you like."

"Boys," said George, in an authoritative tone to two or three negroes who were looking at the body, "help me lift him up, and carry him to my wagon; and get me a spade."

One of them ran for a spade; the other two assisted George to carry the body to the wagon.

George neither spoke to nor looked at Legree, who did not countermand his orders, but stood whistling with an air of forced unconcern. He sulkily followed them to where the wagon stood at the door.

George spread his cloak in the wagon, and had the body carefully disposed in it, moving the seat so as to give it room. Then he turned, fixed his eyes on Legree, and said, with forced composure:

"I have not as yet said to you what I think of this most atrocious affair; this is not the time nor place. But, sir, this innocent blood shall have justice. I will proclaim this murder. I will go to the very first magistrate, and expose you."

"Do!" said Legree, snapping his fingers scornfully. "I'd like to see you doing it! Where you going to get witnesses? How you going to prove it? Come, now!"

George saw at once the force of this defiance. There was not a white person on the place; and, in all southern courts, the testimony of coloured blood is nothing. He felt at that moment as if he could have rent the heavens with his heart's indignant cry for justice; but in vain.

"After all, what a fuss for a dead nigger!" said Legree.

The word was as a spark to a powder magazine. Prudence was never a cardinal virtue of the Kentucky boy. George turned, and, with one indignant blow, knocked Legree flat upon his face; and, as he stood over him, blazing with wrath and defiance, he would have formed no bad personification of his great namesake triumphing over the dragon.

Some men, however, are decidedly bettered by being knocked down. If a man lays them fairly flat in the dust, they seem immediately to conceive a respect for him; Legree was one of this sort. As he rose, therefore, and brushed the dust from his clothes, he eyed the slowly-retreating wagon with some evident consideration; nor did he open his mouth till it was out of sight.

Beyond the boundaries of the plantation George had noticed a dry, sandy knoll, shaded by a few trees; there they made the grave.

"Shall we take off the cloak, mas'r?" said the negroes, when the grave was ready.

"No, no; bury it with him. It's all I can give you now, poor Tom, and you shall have it."

They laid him in ; and the men shovelled away silently. They banked it up, and laid green turf over it.

"You may go, boys," said George, slipping a quarter into the hand of each. They lingered about, however.

"If young mas'r would please buy us——" said one.

"We'd serve him so faithful!" said the other.

"Hard times here, mas'r!" said the first. "Do, mas'r, buy us please!"

"I can't—I can't!" said George, with difficulty, motioning them off ; "it's impossible."

The poor fellows looked dejected, and walked off in silence.

"Witness, eternal God!" said George, kneeling on the grave of his poor friend, "oh, witness that, from this hour, I will do *what one man can* to drive out this curse of slavery from my land!"

There is no monument to mark that last resting-place of our friend. He needs none. His Lord knows where he lies, and will raise him up immortal, to appear with Him when He shall appear in His glory!

Pity him not! Such a life and death is not for pity. Not in the riches of omnipotence is the chief glory of God, but in self-denying, suffering love. And blessed are the men whom He calls to fellowship with Him, bearing their cross after Him with patience. Of such it is written, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AN AUTHENTIC GHOST STORY

For some remarkable reason, ghostly legends were uncommonly rife about this time among the servants on Legree's place.

It was whisperingly asserted that footsteps, in the dead of night, had been heard descending the garret-stairs, and patrolling the house. In vain the doors of the upper entry had been locked ; the ghost either carried a duplicate key in its pocket, or availed itself of a ghost's immemorial privilege of coming through the keyhole, and promenaded as before, with a freedom that was alarming.

Authorities were somewhat divided as to the outward form of the spirit, owing to custom quite prevalent among negroes—and, for aught we know, among whites too—of invariably shutting the eyes, and covering up heads under blankets, petticoats, or whatever else might come in use for a shelter on these occasions.

Be it as it may, we have private reasons for knowing that a tall figure in a white sheet did walk, at the most approved ghostly hours, around the Legree premises—pass out the doors, glide about the house—disappear at intervals, and, reappearing, pass up the silent stairway, into that fatal garret; and that, in the morning, the entry doors were all found shut and locked as firmly as ever.

Legree could not help overhearing this whispering; and it was all the more exciting to him from the pains that were taken to conceal it from him. He drank more brandy than usual; held up his head briskly, and swore louder than ever in the day-time; but he had bad dreams, and the visions of his head on his bed were anything but agreeable. The night after Tom's body had been carried away, he rode to the next town for a carouse, and had a high one. Got home late and tired; locked his door, took out the key, and went to bed.

"Well, he slept, for he was tired—slept soundly. But, finally, there came over his sleep a shadow, a horror, an apprehension of something dreadful hanging over him. It was his mother's shroud, he thought; but Cassy had it, holding it up, and showing it to him. He heard a confused noise of screams and groanings; and, with it all, he knew he was asleep, and he struggled to wake himself. He was half awake. He was sure something was coming into his room, He knew the door was opening, but he could not stir hand or foot. At last he turned, with a start; the door *was* open and he saw a hand putting out his light.

It was a cloudy, misty moonlight, and there he saw it!—something white, gliding in! He heard the still rustle of its ghostly garments. It stood still by his bed: a cold hand touched his; a voice said, three times, in a low, fearful whisper, "Come! come! come!" And, while he lay sweating with terror, he knew not when or how, the thing was gone. He sprang out of bed, and pulled at the door. It was shut and locked, and the man fell down in a swoon.

After this, Legree became a harder drinker than ever before. He no longer drank cautiously, prudently, but imprudently and recklessly.

There were reports around the country, soon after, that he was sick and dying. Excess had brought on that frightful disease that seems to throw the lurid shadows of a coming retribution back into the present life. None could bear the horrors of that sick-room when he raved and screamed, and spoke of sights which almost stopped the blood of those who heard him; and, at his dying bed, stood a stern, white, inexorable figure, saying, "Come! come! come!"

By a singular coincidence, on the very night that this vision appeared to Legree, the house-door was found open in the morning, and some of the negroes had seen two white figures gliding down the avenue towards the high road.

It was near sunrise when Cassy and Emmeline paused, for a moment, in a little knot of trees near the town.

Cassy was dressed after the manner of the Creole Spanish ladies wholly in black. A small black bonnet on her head, covered by a veil thick with embroidery, concealed her face. It had been agreed that, in their escape, she was to personate the character of a Creole lady, and Emmeline that of her servant.

Brought up, from early life, in connexion with the highest society, the language, movements, and air of Cassy were all in agreement with this idea; and she had still enough remaining with her of a once splendid wardrobe, and sets of jewels, to enable her to personate the things to advantage.

She stopped in the outskirts of the town, where she had noticed trunks for sale and purchased a handsome one. This she requested the man to send along with her. And, accordingly, thus escorted by a boy wheeling her trunk, and Emmeline behind her, carrying her carpet-bag and sundry bundles, she made her appearance at the small tavern, like a lady of consideration.

The first person that struck her, after her arrival, was George Shelby, who was staying there, awaiting the next boat. Cassy had remarked the young man from her loop-hole in the garret, and seen him bear away the body of Tom, and observed with secret exultation, his *rencontre* with

Legree. Subsequently she had gathered, from the conversations she had overheard among the negroes, as she glided about in her ghostly disguise after nightfall, who he was, and in what relation he stood to Tom. She therefore felt an immediate accession of confidence when she found that he was, like herself, awaiting the next boat.

Cassy's air and manner, address, and evident command of money, prevented any rising disposition to suspicion in the hotel. People never inquire too closely into those who are fair on the main point, of paying well—a thing which Cassy had foreseen when she provided herself with money.

In the edge of the evening, a boat was heard coming along, and George Shelby handed Cassy aboard, with the politeness which comes naturally to every Kentuckian, and exerted himself to provide her with a good state-room.

Cassy kept her room and bed, on a pretext of illness, during the whole time they were on Red River, and was waited on with obsequious devotion by her attendant.

When they arrived at the Mississippi River, George, having learned that the course of the strange lady was upward, like his own, proposed to take a state-room for her on the same boat with himself—good naturedly compassionating her feeble health, and desirous to do what he could to assist her.

Behold, therefore, the whole party safely transferred to the good steamer *Cincinnati*, and sweeping up the river under a powerful head of steam.

Cassy's health was much better. She sat upon the guards, came to the table, and was remarked upon in the boat as a lady that must have been very handsome.

From the moment that George got the first glimpse of her face, he was troubled with one of those fleeting and indefinite likenesses which almost everybody can remember, and has been, at times, perplexed with. He could not keep himself from looking at her, and watching her perpetually. At table, or sitting at her state-room door, still she would encounter the young man's eyes fixed on her, and politely withdrawn, when she showed, by her countenance, that she was sensible of the observation.

Cassy became uneasy. She began to think that he suspected something; and finally resolved to throw herself

entirely on his generosity, and entrusted him with her whole history.

George was heartily disposed to sympathise with anyone who had escaped from Legree's plantation—a place that he could not remember or speak of with patience; and, with the courageous disregard of consequences which is characteristic of his age and state, he assured her that he would do all in his power to protect and bring them through.

The next state-room to Cassy's was occupied by a French lady, named De Thoux, who was accompanied by a fine little daughter, a child of some twelve summers.

This lady, having gathered from George's conversation that he was from Kentucky, seemed evidently disposed to cultivate his acquaintance; in which design she was seconded by the graces of her little girl, who was about as pretty a plaything as ever diverted the weariness of a fortnight's trip on a steamboat.

George's chair was often placed at her state-room door; and Cassy, as she sat upon the guards, could hear their conversation.

Madame de Thoux was very minute in her inquiries as to Kentucky, where she said she had resided in a former period of her life. George discovered, to his surprise, that the former residence must have been in his own vicinity; and her inquiries showed a knowledge of people and things in his region that was perfectly surprising to him.

"Do you know," said Madame de Thoux to him one day, "of any man in your neighbourhood of the name of Harris?"

"There is an old fellow of that name lives not far from my father's place," said George. "We never have had much intercourse with him, though."

"He is a large slave-owner, I believe," said Madame de Thoux, with a manner which seemed to betray more interest than she was exactly willing to show.

"He is," said George, looking rather surprised at her manner.

"Did you ever know of his having—perhaps you may have heard of his having a mulatto boy named George?"

"Oh, certainly—George Harris—I know him well; he

married a servant of my mother's, but has escaped now to Canada."

"He has?" said Madame de Thoux quickly. "Thank God."

George looked a surprised inquiry, but said nothing.

Madame de Thoux leaned her head on her hand, and burst into tears. "He is my brother!" she said.

"Madame!" said George, with a strong accent of surprise.

"Yes," said Madame de Thoux, lifting her head proudly, and wiping her tears, "Mr. Shelby, George Harris is my brother."

"I am perfectly astonished," said George, pushing back his chair a pace or two, and looking at Madame de Thoux.

"I was sold to the South when he was a boy," said she. "I was bought by a good and generous man. He took me with him to the West Indies, set me free, and married me. It is but lately that he died, and I was coming up to Kentucky to see if I could find and redeem my brother."

"I have heard him speak of a sister Emily, that was sold South," said George.

"Yes, indeed! I am the one," said Madame de Thoux. "Tell me, what sort of a——"

"A very fine young man," said George, "notwithstanding the curse of slavery that lay on him. He sustained a first-rate character, both for intelligence and principle. I know you see," he said, "because he married in our family."

"What sort of a girl?" said Madame de Thoux eagerly.

"A treasure!" said George. "A beautiful, intelligent, amiable girl. Very pious. My mother had brought her up, and trained her as carefully almost as a daughter. She could read and write, embroider and sew, beautifully; and was a beautiful singer."

"Was she born in your house?" said Madame de Thoux.

"No. Father bought her once, in one of his trips to New Orleans, and brought her up as a present to mother. She was about eight or nine years old then. Father would never tell mother what he gave for her; but the other day, in looking over his old papers, we came across the bill of sale. He paid an extravagant sum for her, to be sure—I suppose on account of her extraordinary beauty."

George sat with his back to Cassy, and did not see the absorbed expression of her countenance as he was giving these details.

At this point in the story she touched his arm, and, with a face perfectly white with interest, said, "Do you know the names of the people he bought her of?"

"A man of the name of Simmons, I think, was the principal in the transaction—at least, I think that was the name on the bill of sale."

"Oh, my God!" said Cassy, and fell insensible on the floor of the cabin.

George was wide awake now, and so was Madame de Thoux. Though neither of them could conjecture what was the cause of Cassy's fainting, still they made all the tumult which is proper in such cases—George upsetting a wash-pitcher, and breaking two tumblers, in the warmth of his humanity; and various ladies in the cabin, hearing that somebody had fainted, crowded to the state-room door, and kept out all the air they possibly could, so that, on the whole, everything was done that could be expected.

Poor Cassy, when she recovered, turned her face to the wall and wept and sobbed like a child—perhaps, mother, you can tell what she was thinking of! Perhaps you cannot; but she felt sure, in that hour, that God had had mercy on her, and that she should again see her daughter—as she did months afterwards—when—but we anticipate.

CHAPTER XXXIX

RESULTS

THE rest of our story is soon told. George Shelby, interested, as any other young man might be, by the romance of the incident, no less than by feelings of humanity, was at the pains to send to Cassy the bill of sale of Eliza, whose date and name all corresponded with her own knowledge of facts, and left no doubt upon her mind as to the identity of her child. It remained now only for her to trace out the path of the fugitives.

Madame de Thoux and she, thus drawn together by the

singular coincidence of their fortunes, proceeded immediately to Canada, and began a tour of inquiry among the stations, where the numerous fugitives from slavery are located. At Amherstburg they found the missionary with whom George and Eliza had taken shelter on their first arrival in Canada, and through him were enabled to trace the family to Montreal.

George and Eliza had now been five years free. George had found constant occupation in the shop of a worthy machinist, where he had been earning a competent support for his family, which, in the meantime, had been increased by the addition of another daughter.

Little Harry, a fine bright boy, had been put to a good school, and was making rapid proficiency in knowledge.

The worthy pastor of the station in Amherstburg, where George had first landed, was so much interested in the statements of Madame de Thoux and Cassy, that he yielded to the solicitations of the former to accompany them to Montreal in their search—she bearing all the expenses of the expedition.

The scene now changes to a small, neat tenement, in the outskirts of Montreal; the time, evening. A cheerful fire blazes on the hearth; a tea-table, covered with a snowy cloth, stands prepared for the evening meal. In one corner of the room was a table covered with a green cloth, where was an open writing-desk, pens, paper, and over it a shelf of well-selected books.

This was George's study. The same zeal for self-improvement which led him to steal the much coveted arts of reading and writing, amid all the toils and discouragements of his early life, still led him to devote all his leisure-time to self-cultivation.

At this present time he is seated at the table, making notes from a volume of the family library he has been reading.

"Come, George," says Eliza, "you've been gone all day. Do put down that book and let us talk while I'm getting tea—do!"

And little Eliza seconds the effort by toddling up to her father, and trying to pull the book out of his hand, and instal herself on his knee as a substitute.

"Oh, you little witch!" says George, yielding, as, in such circumstances, man always must.

"That's right," said Eliza, as she begins to cut a loaf of bread. A little older she looks; her form a little fuller; her hair more matronly than of yore; but evidently contented and happy as woman needs be.

"Harry, my boy, how did you come on in that sum to-day?" says George, as he laid his hand on his son's head.

Harry has lost his long curls; but he can never lose those eyes and eyelashes, and that fine, bold brow, that flushes with triumph, as he answers, "I did it, every bit of it, *myself*, father; and *nobody* helped me."

"That's right," says his father; "depend on yourself, my son. You have a better chance than ever your poor father had."

At this moment there is a rap at the door; and Eliza goes and opens it. The delighted "Why—this you?" calls up her husband; and the good pastor of Amherstburg is welcomed. There are two women with him, and Eliza asks them to sit down.

Now, if the truth must be told, the honest pastor had arranged a little programme, according to which this affair was to develop itself; and, on the way up, all had very cautiously and prudently exhorted each other not to let things out, except according to previous arrangement.

What was the good man's consternation, therefore, just as he had motioned to the ladies to be seated, and was taking out his pocket-handkerchief to wipe his mouth, so as to proceed to his introductory speech in good order, when Madame de Thoux upset the whole plan by throwing her arms around George's neck, and letting all out at once by saying, "O George, don't you know me? I'm your sister Emily!"

Cassy had seated herself more composedly, and would have carried on her part very well, had not little Eliza suddenly appeared before her in exact shape and form, every outline and curl just as her daughter was when she saw her last. The little thing peered up in her face; and Cassy caught her up in her arms, pressed her to her bosom, saying what at the moment she really believed, "Darling, I'm your mother!"

In fact, it was a troublesome matter to do up exactly in proper order; but the good pastor, at last, succeeded in getting everybody quiet, and delivering the speech with which he had intended to open the exercises; and in which, at last, he succeeded so well that his whole audience were sobbing about him in a manner that ought to satisfy any orator, ancient or modern.

They knelt together, and the good man prayed—for there are some feelings so agitated and tumultuous that they can find rest only by being poured into the bosom of Almighty Love—and then, rising up, the new-found family embraced each other, with a holy trust in Him Who, from such perils and dangers, and by such unknown ways, had brought them together.

Behold our friends now seated around the social board, and getting decidedly companionable; only that Cassy, who keeps little Eliza on her lap, occasionally squeezes the little thing in a manner that rather astonishes her, and obstinately refuses to have her mouth stuffed with cake to the extent the little one desires—alleging, what the child rather wonders at, that she has got something better than cake, and doesn't want it.

And, indeed, in two or three days, such a change has passed over Cassy that our readers would scarcely know her. The despairing, haggard expression of her face had given way to one of gentle trust. She seemed to sink at once into the bosom of the family, and take the little ones into her heart, as something for which it long had waited. Indeed, her love seemed to flow more naturally to the little Eliza than to her own daughter; for she was the exact image and body of the child whom she had lost. The little one was a flowery bud between mother and daughter, through whom grew up acquaintanceship and affection. Eliza's steady, consistent piety, regulated by the constant reading of the sacred word, made her a proper guide for the shattered and wearied mind of her mother. Cassy yielded at once, and with her whole soul, to every good influence, and became a devout and tender Christian.

After a day or two, Madame de Thoux told her brother more particularly of her affairs. The death of her husband had left her an ample fortune, which she generously offered

to share with the family. When she asked George what way she could best apply it for him, he answered, "Give me an education, Emily; that has always been my heart's desire. Then I can do all the rest."

On mature deliberation, it was decided that the whole family should go, for some years, to France; whither they sailed, carrying Emmeline with them.

The good looks of the latter won the affection of the first mate of the vessel; and, shortly after entering the port, she became his wife.

George remained four years at a French university, and applying himself with an unintermitted zeal, obtained a very thorough education.

Political troubles in France at last led the family again to seek an asylum in Canada.

George's feelings and views, as an educated man, may be best expressed in a letter to one of his friends.

"I feel somewhat at a loss as to my future course. True, as you have said to me, I might mingle in the circles of the whites in this country, my shade of colour is so slight, and that of my wife and family scarce perceptible. Well, perhaps, on sufferance, I might. But to tell you the truth, I have no wish to.

"My sympathies are not for my father's race, but for my mother's. To him I was no more than a fine dog or horse; to my poor heart-broken mother I was a *child;* and, though I never saw her after the cruel sale that separated us till she died, yet I *know* she always loved me dearly. I know it by my own heart. When I think of all she suffered, of my own early sufferings, of the distresses, and struggles of my heroic wife, of my sister sold in the New Orleans slave-market—though I hope to have no unchristian sentiments, yet I may be excused for saying I have no wish to pass for an American or to identify myself with them.

"It is with the oppressed, enslaved African race that I cast in my lot; and if I wished anything, I would wish myself two shades darker, rather than one lighter."

George, with his wife, children, sister, and mother, embarked for Africa, some few weeks after. If we are not mistaken the world will yet hear from him there.

Of our other characters we have nothing very particular

to write, except a word relating to Miss Ophelia and Topsy, and a farewell chapter, which we shall dedicate to George Shelby.

Miss Ophelia took Topsy home to Vermont with her, much to the surprise of that grave deliberate body whom a New Englander recognises under the term "*Our folks.*" "Our folks," at first, thought it an odd and unnecessary addition to their well-trained domestic establishment; but, so thoroughly efficient was Miss Ophelia in her conscientious endeavour to do her duty by her *élève*, that the child rapidly grew in grace and in favour with the family and neighbourhood. At the age of womanhood she was, by her own request, baptised, and became a member of the Christian Church in the place; and showed so much intelligence, activity, and zeal, and desire to do good in the world, that she was at last recommended and approved as a missionary to one of the stations in Africa; and we have heard that the same activity and ingenuity which, when a child, made her so multiform and restless in her developments, is now employed, in a safer and wholesomer manner, in teaching the children of her own country.

P.S.—It will be a satisfaction to some mother also to state, that some inquiries which were set on foot by Madame de Thoux have resulted recently in the discovery of Cassy's son. Being a young man of energy, he had escaped some years before his mother, and been received and educated by friends of the oppressed in the North. He will soon follow his family to Africa.

CHAPTER XL

THE LIBERATOR

GEORGE SHELBY had written to his mother merely a line, stating the day that she might expect him home. Of the death-scene of his old friend he had not the heart to write. He had tried several times, and only succeeded in half choking himself; and invariably finished by tearing up the paper, wiping his eyes, and rushing somewhere to get quiet.

There was a pleased bustle all through the Shelby

mansion that day in expectation of the arrival of young Mas'r George.

Mrs. Shelby was seated in her comfortable parlour, where a cheerful hickory fire was dispelling the chill of the late autumn evening. A supper-table glittering with plate and cut-glass was set out, over whose arrangements our former friend, old Chloe, was presiding.

Arrayed in a new calico dress, with clean, white apron, and high, well-starched turban, her black polished face glowing with satisfaction, she lingered, with needless punctiliousness, around the arrangements of the table, merely as an excuse for talking a little to her mistress.

"Laws, now! won't it look natural to him?" she said. "Thar—I set his plate just whar he likes it—round by the fire. Mas'r George allers wants de warm seat. Oh, go 'way! Why didn't Sally get out de *best* teapot—de little new one Mas'r George got for missis, Christmas? I'll have it out! An' missis has heard from Mas'r George?" she said inquiringly

"Yes, Chloe; but only a line, just to say he would be home to-night, if he could—that's all"

"Didn't say nothin' 'bout my old man, s'pose?" said Chloe, still fidgeting with the tea-cups.

"No, he didn't. He did not speak of anything, Chloe. He said he would tell all when he got home."

"Jes like Mas'r George; he's allers so ferce for tellin' everything hisself. I allers minded dat ar in Mas'r George. Don't see, for my part, how white people gen'lly can bar to hev to writ things much as they do—writin's such slow, oneasy kind o' work."

Mrs. Shelby smiled.

"I'm a thinkin' my old man won't know do boys and de baby. Lor! she's de biggest gal, now; good she is, too, and peart, Polly is. She's out to the house now, watchin' de hoecake. I's got jist de very pattern my old man liked so much a-bakin'. Jist sich as I gin him the mornin' he was took off. Lord bless us! how I felt dat ar morning!"

Mrs. Shelby sighed, and felt a heavy weight on her heart at this allusion. She had felt uneasy ever since she received her son's letter, lest something should prove to be hidden behind the veil of silence which he had drawn.

"Missis has got dem bills?" said Chloe anxiously.

"Yes, Chloe."

"'Cause I wants to show my old man dem very bills de *perfectioner* gave me. 'And,' says he, 'Chloe, I wish you'd stay longer.' 'Thank you, mas'r,' says I,' 'I would, only my ole man's coming home, and missis, she can't do without me no longer.' There's jist what I telled him. Bery nice man, dat Mas'r Jones was."

Chloe had pertinaciously insisted that the very bills in which her wages had been paid should be preserved to show to her husband, in memorial of her capability; and Mrs. Shelby had readily consented to humour her in the request.

"He won't know Polly—my old man won't. Laws, it's five years since they tuck him! She was a baby den! coudn't but jist stand. Remember how tickled he used to be, 'cause she would keep a-fallin' over, when she sot out to walk. Laws a me!"

The rattling of wheels was now heard.

"Mas'r George!" said Aunt Chloe, starting to the window.

Mrs. Shelby ran to the entry door, and was folded in the arms of her son. Aunt Chloe stood anxiously straining her eyes out into the darkness.

"O *poor* Aunt Chloe!" said George, stopping compassionately, and taking her hard, black hand between both his. "I'd have given all my fortune to have brought him with me; but he's gone to a better country."

There was a passionate exclamation from Mrs. Shelby, but Aunt Chloe said nothing.

The party entered the supper-room. The money of which Chloe was so proud was still lying on the table.

"Thar," said she, gathering it up, and holding it with a trembling hand to her mistress, "don't never want to see nor hear on't again. Jist as I knew 'twould be—sold and murdered on dem ar old plantations!"

Chloe turned, and was walking proudly out of the room. Mrs. Shelby followed her softly, and took one of her hands, drew her down into a chair, and sat down by her.

"My poor, good Chloe!" said she.

Chloe leaned her head on her mistress's shoulder, and

sobbed out: "O missis, 'scuse me, my heart's broke—dat's all!"

"I know it is," said Mrs. Shelby, as her tears fell fast; "and *I* cannot heal it, but Jesus can. He healeth the broken-hearted, and bindeth up their wounds."

There was a silence for some time, and all wept together. At last George, sitting down beside the mourner, took her hand and, with simple pathos, repeated the triumphant scene of her husband's death and his last messages of love.

About a month after this, one morning, all the servants of the Shelby estate were convened together in the great hall that ran through the house, to hear a few words from their young master.

To the surprise of all, he appeared among them with a bundle of papers in his hand, containing a certificate of freedom to everyone on the place, which he read successively, and presented, amid the sobs, and tears, and shouts of all present.

Many, however, pressed around him, earnestly begging him not to send them away; and, with anxious faces, tendering back their free papers.

"We don't want to be no freer than we are. We's allers had all we wanted. We don't want to leave de ole place, and mas'r and missis, and de rest!"

"My good friends," said George, as soon as he could get a silence, "there'll be no need for you to leave me. The place wants as many hands to work as it did before. We need the same about the house that we did before. But you are now free men and free women. I shall pay you wages for your work, such as we shall agree on. The advantage is that in case of my getting in debt or dying—things that might happen—you cannot now be taken up and sold. I expect to carry on the estate, and to teach you what, perhaps, it will take you some time to learn—how to use the rights I give you as free men and women. I expect you to be good, and willing to learn; and I trust in God that I shall be faithful, and willing to teach. And now, my friends, look up, and thank God for the blessing of freedom."

An aged, patriarchal negro, who had grown grey and blind on the estate, now rose, and, lifting his trembling

hand, said, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord!" As all kneeled by one consent, a more touching and hearty Te Deum never ascended to heaven, though borne on the peal of organ, bell, and cannon, than came from that honest old heart.

On rising, another struck up a Methodist hymn, of which the burden was:

> The year of Jubilee is come;
> Return, ye ransomed sinners, home.

"One thing more," said George, as he stopped the congratulations of the throng. "You'll all remember our good old Uncle Tom?"

George here gave a short narration of the scene of his death, and of his loving farewell to all on the place, and added:

"It was on his grave, my friends, that I resolved, before God, that I would never own another slave while it was possible to free him; that nobody, through me, should ever run the risk of being parted from home and friends, and dying on a lonely plantation, as he died. So, when you rejoice in your freedom, think that you owe it to that good old soul, and pay it back in kindness to his wife and children. Think of your freedom every time you see UNCLE TOM'S CABIN; and let it be a memorial to put you all in mind to follow in his steps, and be as honest, and faithful, and Christian as he was."

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